
THE
Mercenary LOVER:

AND THE
PADLOCK:

Two Historical NOVELS.

By E. H:



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THE
Mercenary LOVER:
OR, THE
Unfortunate Heiresses.

Being a True Secret

HISTORY
OF A
CITY AMOUR.

By the Author of *Reflections on the various
Effects of Love.*

*Even Beauty, Force Divine! at whose bright Glance,
The Generous Lyon stands in soften'd Gaze.
Here bleeds a hapless, undistinguish'd Prey.
Thomson's Winter. A Poem.*

The Third EDITION.

To which is added, The *PADLOCK*: Or,
No GUARD with ut VIRTUE. A Novel.

L O N D O N :

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THE
Mercenary Lover;

OR, THE
Unfortunate Heiress.

HISTORY



By the Author of Reflections on the Union
of the Two Kingdoms.

From the Press of the Author, at No. 1, Pall Mall.
The Original Manuscript is deposited in the
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all persons who may wish to consult it.

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LONDON:

Printed for M. Dole, in the Strand; And Sold
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1792.

T H E

PREFACE.

SO many Stories, merely the Effect of a good Invention, having been published as real Facts, I think it proper to inform my Reader, that the following Pages are fill'd with a sad, but true Account of the Misfortunes of a Family, living in the Metropolis of one of the finest Islands in the World ; and happen'd in the Neighbourhood of a celebrated Church, in the Sound of whose Bells the Inhabitants of that populous City think it an Honour to be born.

The Character of the Mercenary Lover, black and detestable

P R E F A C E.

as it is, would yet have been more shocking, had I inserted some Passages of his former Life; but tho' the Baseness and Cruelty of his Disposition was not less conspicuous in some other of his Actions than in this last, of which I have made mention, yet the Persons ruin'd by him being of inferior Merit, I chose rather to confine my self to that, where neither the Ties of Affinity, nor the Charms of Beauty, Innocence and Virtue, could be a sufficient Protection from his destructive Artifices, than to run on with a long Detail of particular Vices which all seem complicated in this one.

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T H E
Mercenary LOVER.



O W little are the ill judging Multitude capable of chusing for themselves ! How far are Wealth and Beauty, the two great Idols of the admiring World, from being real Blessings to the Possessors of them !

With what numberless Dangers are their Attractions accompanied ! and into what fatal Inadvertancies do they frequently plunge those who place their Dependance on them.

In a little Town, more famous for the Wholesomeness of its Air, than Magnificence of its Buildings, or any other remarkable Qualification, there liv'd two Sisters, Co-heiresses of a very plentiful Estate ; the younger of them, whose Name was *Miranda*, being of an airy, gay Disposition, gave Way to the Addresses of as many as had any Pretensions to merit a favourable Reception : But *Althea* the elder being naturally more reserved and grave, was extreamly cautious who she entertained ; and as she seem'd little ambitious of creating Admiration, was also not very inclinable to pay it : Hope, being the chief Food of Love, (especially in an Age where few Men, like the

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Heroes

Heroes of Antiquity, can patiently submit to a Seven Years Service, before they receiv'd the Reward of a Kiss of the Hand) she afforded so little of that, that she had but few of those who declar'd themselves her Lovers, in Comparison with the Number who watch'd the Smiles of the eternally gay *Miranda*.

Among those who endeavour'd at the Secret to please this celebrated Toast, none had more Reason to flatter himself with Hopes of Success than young *Clitander*, an Inhabitant of the Metropolitan City of this Island; and tho' of no higher Rank than a Trader, had a paternal Estate, which, together with his great Business, made his Fortune on an Equivalent with that of *Miranda*: To add to this, he had a very agreeable Person, and was Master of Accomplishments rare to be found in a Man of his Station: In fine, he was such as *Miranda* liked, and of the Multitude who address'd her, he alone had the Power of inspiring her with a real Passion, all others who pretended to her served but to amuse her Vanity, the trifling Divertors of her gayer Moments; but *Clitander* in a small Time became the solid Business of her most serious Inclinations; when present, she felt a Pain-mix'd-Pleasure; and when absent, an Uneasiness, a certain Restlessness of Mind, which is the infallible Demonstrative of Love. He was too well acquainted with the Symptoms of that Passion not to perceive he had inspir'd her with a Share of it, sufficient to encourage him to expect every Thing from it which he could desire; and redoubling his Attacks, prest her in a Manner so undeniable, that he not only obtained from her a Promise of Marriage, but also saw, that as one Step towards the Performance of it, she banish'd all others who made Professions of the same Nature his was, from her House. It would be need-

needless to detain my Reader with an immaterial Repetition of the Acknowledgments he made for this Condescension, the Behaviour of a Lover in the like happy Circumstance, is too generally known to want an Information ; and if the Sequel of this Story should prove him not in Reality possess'd of the Passion he pretended, yet it will infer that he had Aims which were fully answer'd by the favourable Sentiments she had of him. I shall therefore pass over in Silence those Particulars, which without my Assistance may easily be guess'd at, and only say, That every Thing being agreed, and the Relations on both Sides perfectly satisfied as to Matters of Joynture and Settlements, these seemingly happy Pair were in a short Time united by a Tye, which ought to be indissoluble but by Death. They were married, and *Miranda* grew so perfectly fond of her agreeable Citizen, that in Conformity to the Notions and Behaviour of those she came to live among, she entirely threw off the gay Coquet, and began to dress, look, speak, and act in every Thing as became a Person of the Station she had taken on her. *Clitander* on the other Hand express'd the utmost Pleasure at this Alteration of her Conduct, appear'd the most indulging Husband, as she did the most obliging Wife; and they were look'd on by all who knew them, as the most exemplary Patterns of Conjugal Affection.

'Tis certain, indeed, that on one Side the Felicity was sincere and compleat, *Miranda* truly lov'd, and believ'd herself as well belov'd; but alas! where is the Skill to trace, or Rules to reach the unfathomable Heart of artful Man, practis'd in Wiles, experienc'd in Deceit, amidst the many Turnings Search is lost; and the short Sight of Female Penetration strives but in vain to pierce the hidden Depth: If a long Series of continued

Courtship, if Longings, Ardours, and Impatience before Possession, cou'd denote a true and perfect Passion, if the most eager Transports, oft repeated Vows, and tender Pressures afterwards, might evince the Person faithful, *Clitander* had been the most enamour'd and most constant Man on Earth, and *Miranda* been as blest in *Reality*, as she was now in *Imagination*. But his was not a Soul capable of being touch'd with the Charms either of the Body or the Mind; Beauty, Virtue, or good Humour, he look'd on as Things indifferent, and not at all essential to the Happiness of Life, ——— Money was the only Darling of his mercenary Wishes, and as the Estate of which *Miranda* was Co-heiress, was the sole Inducement to his addressing and marrying her; so by that Means being possess'd by that Moiety of it which was her Proportion, he now began to grow anxious for the other also, and put Invention on a continual Rack for some Contrivance to bring the long'd-for Aim about.

The serious and reserved Temper of *Althea* gave him Hopes that she would not very easily be brought to listen to any Proposals; but as averse as she had hitherto declared herself, he knew not how soon the Minute might arrive which might make an Alteration in her Sentiments in Favour of some Youth, who she might think worthy to create that Change: Love, he knew, was a Passion which comes swift and sudden on the Heart; his Business therefore was, to prevent as much as possible all Overtures of that Kind being made to her. To that End, under the Pretence of Affection to his Wife, he scarce ever suffer'd her to be from their House, and by a Thousand Artifices, of which he was a perfect Master, so wound himself into her Esteem, that she thought there was not so excellent a Man on Earth:

Earth : All he said she listned to as miraculous Truth, admir'd all he did, as the Effects of the strictest Honour, and most tender Friendship.

Having gained this Influence over her, there was little Need to fear she would take any Affair in Hand, much less one of so great Consequence as Marriage was, without consulting him, and that it was now absolutely in his Power to dissuade her from entertaining any Man, however agreeable in Person or in Fortune, who should make his Addresses to her on that Score ; yet, notwithstanding he knew all this ; nay, had heard her frequently declare, That to the Aversion she ever had for Marriage, she had now another Motive added, to induce her to continue in a single Life, which was, that she would rather that Part of the Estate she was possesst of should at her Death descend to him and his Heirs, than any other Person in the World ; all was not sufficient to content him, — there was a Possibility that these fine Promises might one Day be broke : --

Althea was beautiful as an Angel, and very young, tho' one Year older than his Wife ; ——— he knew there were a Thouland dying for her, and could not be easy when he reflected that there was any Thing in the Power of Fate which could put a Bar to his avaritious Views, which in a little Time he became so resolutely bent to compass, that he had Recourse to Stratagems, the most inhumane and base, that ever entred into the Heart of Man. He was sometimes tempted to marry her to some indigent Wretch, who for a trifling Sum would be glad to make over to him before-hand the Acres he should be Master of when made her Husband ; at others, the *Demons*, whole Assistance he invok'd, suggested to him to get her trappan'd on Board a Ship, and transported to some uninhabitable Shore, where she shou'd

he left to perish on the Rocks, or be devoured by the wild Denizens of the Woods and Mountains; but both these Designs were rejected, almost as soon as formed, not that to any relenting Thoughts they owed their Banishment, but there was Danger in them; he dreaded the Discovery of the Villany he wished to practise, and for that Reason could not resolve to take any Measures wherein a Second Person must be consulted, who perhaps, might some Time or other, either through Remorse or Malice, betray the whole Affair, and expose him to the Censure and Punishment his Crime deserved. The base are always Cowards, the same Meanness of Spirit which makes them the one, inclines them to the other also; they are ever in Fear, and while there remains even the smallest Probability of Danger, Peace is a Stranger to their Minds. *Clitander* therefore resolved to trust no other but himself, in the Execution of whatever Project he should put in Practice, and the Difficulty there was to find one, in which there was not an absolute Necessity for a Confederate, kept him for some Months in a Perplexity not to be conceived.

Yet so admirably was he versed in the Art of Dissimulation, that tho his Soul was full of the most poynant Anxiety, his Countenance was all serene and calm as an unruffled Sky; upon his oily Tongue the most melting Accents in soft Persuasion hung, and Tenderneis unspeakable languish'd in his Eyes; gay Smiles played round his Mouth in dimpled Graces, and his whole Air was Harmony and Love: None but the All-seeing Eye of Heaven cou'd penetrate into his Heart, or guess at the Perfidiousness that harbour'd there. Never did two Persons think themselves more happy than did *Miranda* and her amiable Sister, the one in being possess of the best of Men and Husband,

bands, and the other in a most sincere Friend and disinterested Relation. A perfect Amity and uninterrupted Chearfulness, seem'd to reign throughout this little Family. — They were the Envy of their Neighbours, the Delight of their Acquaintance, and the Pride of their Servants : — So much is the World, and even our selves deceived by Appearances ; and how little are we capable of distinguishing the real Felicity from the Shadow of one ? Those who believ'd themselves, and were by all believ'd to be in a State of the most fixed Tranquility that could be, were in Effect on the Brink, and ready to plunge into a Gulph of Destruction, as much to be trembled at, as their imaginary Comfort was before to be desir'd and coveted.

The working Brain of the industriously mischievous *Clitander*, at last furnished him with a Design, in the Success of which he promis'd himself a double Pleasure : Tho' Avarice was his prevailing Vice, and the Love of Money had so entire a Possession of his Soul, that no other Charms had Power to inspire him with a real Passion, yet was he not without those Desires which are too frequently mistaken for the Influence of the God of tender Sighs : The Beauties of *Althea*, and the Freedoms he enjoyed with her as a Brother, had sometimes given him Emotions, such as Lovers feel, tho' unaccompanied with that Respect and Tenderness which those who are truly worthy of that Name must pay to the ador'd Object. — With strong and vehement Desires he burn'd to enjoy her, and when in *Miranda's* Arms, languished to rifle the untasted Loveliness of her beauteous Sister. — He plotted therefore, how first to satiate this Passion, which, once obtain'd, he thought would be the most effectual Means to gratify the other also ; and de-

termin'd to make her guilty before he made her wretched : He soon began to put in Execution this most detestable Invention, by all those Artifices of which he was a perfect Master, and for which, indeed, he seem'd design'd by Nature, who had given him a Countenance and Manner of Behaviour so vastly distant from his sordid Disposition.

To corrupt a young Maid of *Althea's* reserved Humour, bred up in the strictest Principles of Virtue, and unacquainted even with an unchast Thought, would have seem'd a Task too difficult to be accomplish'd, and with Reason have deterr'd any other Man from an Attempt that Way : But *Clitander*, as he was not only possess'd of more bodily Perfections than the Generality of his Sex, so he had also been more successful with the Fair ; seldom had he been repuls'd, but often a Conqueror over the most seemingly obdurate Hearts. — He knew the Influence he had gain'd over that of *Althea*, and tho' it was only contracted under the Notion of Friendship, that that Passion was a very good Preparative for the other which he aimed to inspire. — The Name of Husband to her Sister, was at first some little Impediment to his Hopes, but then the Consideration how many Opportunities that Title gave him, which were denied to all other Men, satisfied his Doubts, and made him not fear but that a little Time and Assiduity, might by Degrees steal into her Soul those Inclinations which wou'd give him the absolute Possession of his Wishes.

The first Step he made towards the Accomplishment of this barbarous Enterprize, was to redouble the Civilities and Tenderesses with which he had been accusom'd to treat *Althea*, and knowing she was naturally a great Lover of
Read-

Reading, took Care to bring her home every Day something new for her Amusement: I say Amusement; for I believe the Reader will easily imagine, the Books he desired she would peruse, were neither Religion, Philosophy, nor Morality; there are certain gay Treatises which insensibly melt down the Soul, and make it fit for amorous Impressions, such as the Works of *Ovid*, the late celebrated *Rocheſter*, and many other of more modern Date, and of this Kind it was that he furnish'd the Study of his intended Victim to the two worst Passions of depraved Humanity.

The Affairs of her Family often calling *Miranda* away, gave him, who now scarce ever stirr'd from Home, many Opportunities of entertaining her alone: All which he employed to the best Advantage for his Designs; not that he ever in the least declar'd himself a Lover, but artfully, and as tho' it were by Accident, introduc'd a Discourse on the Force of Love, always undertaking to prove, That whatever were the Consequences of that Passion they ought not to be condemn'd, because they were unavoidable; — Nay, sometimes went so profanely far, as to make Holy Writ the Dupe to his Designs, bringing Instances from that to argue, that Incest was no Crime. Had the modest Soul of *Althea* been in the least apprized of the Aim of these Conversations, so different from what she had ever been accusom'd to hear, the Shock of such a Discovery had at once stop'd her Ears from listning to Doctrine so pernicious, but as she was far from suspecting any Thing of his Inclinations, and took an infinite Pleasure in hearing him Talk, by little and little the Poison of his infectious Precepts gain'd Ground on her Belief; and finding herself wholly incapable of defending the Cause of Virtue against those Arguments which his supe-

rior Wit and Genius brought, began to think, indeed, that what he said was just, and that those Laws which prohibited a free Commerce between the Sexes, were only the Boundaries of Policy, invented to keep Mankind in Awe, and restrain the Sallies of Nature, which otherwise would involve the World in a general Confusion.

Soon did he perceive the Ground he had gain'd, and exulted at the Success of his Insinuations: Not doubting now, but that he should be able to persuade her to any Thing, he began to appear more open, would often take her Hand and kiss it with Raptures, such as, had she accusom'd herself to receive Addresses of that Nature, she would have presently known to have been the Effects of that Passion which is commonly called Love. ——— When ever he look'd upon her, his well instructed Eyes seem'd to shoot Glances or an unutterable Tenderness, ——— whenever he spoke to her, it was in the fondest, most endearing Terms that Love and Wit could form: ——— Yet so innocent, so unexperienc'd was she in the destructive Passion and the betraying Wiles of Man, that all these Symptoms were not sufficient to alarm, nor warn her of the Danger. Unknowing, therefore, what was doing in her own Soul, she gave Way to all the Liberties he took, and became all dissolv'd, lost in a Tide of Love before she imagined herself threatned by even its most distant Approaches.

But it was not so with him, he read the State of her Mind in the soft Languishments of her shining Eyes, and in her balmy Sighs, when presuming on the Authority of a Brother, he sometimes took her in his Arms, felt the Alteration he had made, and was too well convinc'd that his Work was compleated; and he had nothing now

to do, but to declare himself, and boldly seize his Wishes.

Since the fatal Discovery of her Sentiments some Days elaps'd, without giving him any Opportunity for the Accomplishment of his Designs; but at Length Fortune, hitherto too much a Friend to this Traitor to all Honour and Fidelity, afforded him one as ample as he could have wish'd. *Miranda* went to make a Visit to a Relation who liv'd at the Town where both she and *Althea* had receiv'd their Birth and Education; she would have persuaded her Sister to accompany her, but the ill Stars of that unfortunate Lady, would not suffer her to comply with her Desires; and the other perceiving her refractory, would not press her beyond her Inclination. The Distance between that Place to which she was gone, and the great City in which they lived being about three Miles, her perfidious Husband was secure that she would not return till Night. And scarce ever had his Eyes beheld a Sight so joyful as the Departure of the Coach which bore away that Impediment to his Hopes, his Wife.

She was no sooner gone, than he ran up to the Chamber of *Althea*, where she happen'd to be sitting indulging her innocent Meditations, and altogether unuspicious of approaching Ruin: After some previous Discourse on ordinary Subjects he began to talk of Marriage and the Unhappiness of that State, when both the Parties so join'd, were not content with their Lot. ——— How much, my lovely Sister, should I lament, said he, should I ever see you one of those complaining Wives, your Wit despis'd, your good Humour subservient to a lordly and imperious Husband's Rule, your Beauty, all that inestimable Stock of Charms with which you are so divinely stor'd,
unprais'd

unprais'd, unlov'd, and perhaps scorn'd even to your Face, ——— such a Behaviour is too frequent, and should it be your Fate, O most adorable *Althea*, continued he, with a Voice which seem'd interrupted by his Sighs, how very wretched, how accurst would be *Clitander* to know and want the Power to ease your Mournings, or revenge your Wrongs! Would to Heaven, answered the unsuspecting Maid, I could as easily return the Obligations I have to your generous Care, as I can secure my self from all Apprehensions of those Miseries you so well describe; — the Merits of *Clitander* have freed me from the Danger of becoming an abandon'd Wife; — two such Husbands are not to be the Portion of one Family, ——— I despair to find a Man like him, and cannot submit to accept a Happiness inferiour to that my Sister enjoys.

Tho' these Words were spoken with the most perfect Innocence, they were notwithstanding the Overflowings of a Soul wholly devoted to him, and sincerely taken up with Tendernefs, and Admiration of his imaginary Virtues: And well discerning from what Source they sprung, Thou Angel of thy Sex, said he, taking her in his Arms, how happy shou'd I think my self, cou'd I believe it was, indeed, your good Opinion of me, which defended you from list'ning to the Insinuations of the less faithful Part of Mankind, ——— but alas! pursu'd he intently fixing his Eyes on hers, as tho' he wou'd look into her Soul, I dare not flatter my fond Desires so far, and had I in *Miranda's* Stead address'd *Althea*, I shou'd have been among the Number of those her Scorn has render'd miserable. I must not then have known your Worth, resum'd she, and if you think *Althea* as capable of judging what is truly valuable, as you have found *Miranda*,

*rand*a, you must believe your Fate had been the same with one, as with the other Sister. Had it been so cry'd he, in a well acted Transport, sure some kind Spirit wou'd have warn'd me of the Blessing, — some Dream wou'd have convey'd to me the Knowledge of your Goodness, and instructed by my Guardian Angel what to do, I had not thus err'd in my mistaken Choice. These Expressions utter'd with the utmost Warmth, and accompany'd by an Embrace more strenuous than before this Moment he had ever ventur'd to clasp her with, gave her a little Surprise, and starting from his Arms, and looking on him with a kind of Confusion in her Eyes, Do you not love *Miranda* then? said she. Dear as my Life, reply'd he, who wanted not Presence of Mind to extricate himself out of the most puzzling Difficulties, Never Man lov'd with a sonder, or more lasting Ardour than I my Wife, — but yet, continu'd he, with a Sigh, as if his Heart were bursting, while my Heart avows the Merits of *Miranda*, it cannot be unjust to the infinitely superior ones *Althea* boasts: — Should *Miranda*, forgetful of her Marriage Vows, and ungrateful to the Tenderness I bear her, relinquish me, and seek new Joys in any others Arms, my abused Affection and my wounded Honour wou'd give me Pains intollerable, but shou'd *Althea*, — O the Thought is Hell, — shou'd the adorable *Althea*, tho' bound by no Obligements, admit to her Embraces some Youth, more happy than *Clitander*, how much beyond the Reach of Words wou'd be the Horror of my distracted State! — I cou'd not hear it, but should commit some wild Extravagance might plunge us all in Ruin. — O *Althea*, pursu'd he, taking Advantage of the Astonishment he saw her in, and which preven-

ted

ted her from interrupting him too lovely Maid
 pity your wretched Brother, ——— your Lover,
 ——— your Adorer; ——— the cold Returns of
 Friendship are Cordials too, too faint to keep the
 almost expiring Lamp of Life awake — O give
 me more, or withdraw them too, and kill me
 with your hate. He had no sooner pronounc'd
 these Words than he threw himself upon her
 Bosom, where, if the present Emotions of his
 Desires did not convulse him with real Agonies,
 he counterfeited them so well, that a Woman
 more experienc'd in those Racks of struggling Im-
 paciencies than was *Althea*, might easily have
 mistaken them for Natural. But with what
 Words is it possible to represent the mingled
 Passions of *Althea's* Soul, now perfectly instruct-
 ed in his Meaning; Fear, Shame, and Wonder
 combating with the softer Inclinations, made
 such a wild Confusion in her Mind, that as she
 was about to utter the Dictates of the one, the
 other rose with contradicting Force, and stop'd
 the Accents e're she cou'd form them into Speech;
 in broken Sentences she sometimes seem'd to
 favour, then to discourage his Attempts, but
 all dissolv'd and melted down by that superior
 Passion, of which herself till now was ignorant
 she had entertain'd, never had Courage to repel
 the growing Boldness, with which he every Mo-
 ment encroach'd upon her Modesty, and when
 she most strove to say something which might
 dash his Hopes, cou'd bring forth no harsher
 Sounds than, Forbear, forbear my dangerous, and
 too lovely Brother! cruel *Clitander*, wou'd you
 ruin me? 'Tis easy to guess what the Conse-
 quences of such Sort of Repulses must be, and
 whether such a Behaviour wou'd not have been
 far from dissipating the Ardour of a Lover, less
 fiercely animated than was *Clitander*. He made
 but

but short Replies to her Entreaties or Interrogatories, speaking to her only in this Manner, O permit me to secure the Blessing you have so often promis'd, — let me assure my self you never will be another's, — be mine and ease me of these Doubts Uncertainty creates. — Nor, indeed, wou'd it have been conformable to the rest of his Artifice to have held a long Conversation, or given her Time for Thought or Recollection, *Action* was now his Business, and in this Hurry of her Spirits, all unprepar'd, incapable of Defence, half yielding, half reluctant, and scarce sensible of what she suffer'd, he bore her trembling to the Bed, and perpetrated the cruel Purpose he had long since contriv'd.

The Scene of Ruin over, the barbarous Author of it, now began to exert his utmost Wit and Eloquence to dry her Tears, and hush the Remonstrances of violated Virtue; he enforc'd the Arguments she had before too fatally given Ear to, That the Ties of Blood or Affinity were but imaginary Bars to Love, pleaded the Violence of his Passion, and the absolute Necessity it brought, either to enjoy his wish or dye; swore ten thousand Oaths of an unalterable Constancy, and that the Secret never should be divulg'd. — The natural Propensity which all People have to listen to any Arguments which may serve to excuse the Errors they commit, join'd to the Corruption which his Insinuations had brought on her Principles, made her not aim at confuting any Thing he urg'd either in his, or her own Vindication; and of all the Passions which had so lately ruffled her Soul, Love and Shame were only now remaining: By repeated and endearing Familiarities he endeavour'd to strenghten the one, and entirely dissipate the other; but the Confusion of her Mind

was

was so great, that tho' he stirr'd not from her the whole Day, he found all his Efforts to compose her ineffectual; and at her Sister's Return, the Sight of that wrong'd Lady overwhelm'd her with a Disorder which had been sufficient to have made some Women suspicious of the Truth. The villainous Occasion of it, apprehensive of the Danger, and also to prevent any Notice being taken of his having been all Day in the Chamber of *Althea*, if the Servants shou'd happen to speak of it, with an unparallel'd Assurance, taking his Wife in his Arms as soon as ever she enter'd the Room, I am glad you are come home my Dear, said he, *Althea* is quite spoil'd with the Vapours, and tho' I have been complaisant enough not to leave her a Moment since you went out, all I can do to bring her into good Humour is but Labour thrown away; — she will, in spite of me, indulge her Chagrin, and will give no other Reason for it, than that she had an ugly Dream last Night. *Miranda* laugh'd at this idle Superstition (as she call'd it) in her Sister, and began to rally her on the ill Effects of a too thoughtful Disposition; till the other (who long'd to be alone, to give a Loose to Reflection) answer'd her in so peevish a Manner, that she seem'd in good Earnest affected with that Distemper. *Clitander* had accused her of; and what was really the Effects of Remorse might very well be taken for ill Humour. *Miranda* continued her pleasantry for some Time, but finding it of no Effect on her Sister, Come my Dear, said she, taking her Husband by the Hand, let us leave her to herself, — if we stay here much longer, we too shall catch the Contagion. — As she spoke these Words they both quitted the Room. *Clitander* as he was going out, turning back to make her a submissive

missive Bow, accompany'd with the most tender and endearing Air that Love cou'd teach him to assume.

Althea now left to the Freedom of her Thoughts, felt a kind of Pleasure, in giving Way to Pain and in not checking the Struggles of departing Virtue, found the Means to ease herself of its Remorse, ——— She accused her easy Nature, wonder'd how she cou'd be so lost, so abandoned by all the Principles her Youth was taught, and curst the Tenderness which had betray'd her, ——— the Wrong she had done her Sister, the Dishonour she had brought on herself, the Crime she had been guilty of to Heaven, all appear'd to her distracted Imagination in their blackest and most damning Colours, and for some Moments involv'd her in so terrible a Dispair, that she was almost ready to lay desperate Hands on her own Life, thereby to put a Period to the Shame of it. But as Things violent are seldom of any long Continuance, the Force of these Emotions in a few Moments were evaporated and spent; and the Idea of *Clitander*, his Charms, his Fondness, and imagin'd Honour and Sweetness of Disposition, took their Turn to triumph over the faint Remains of Modesty and Virtue; and the Felicity of being belov'd by a Man whom she considered as the Wonder of his Sex, seem'd to her sufficient Reparation for that she had resigned in the rewarding it; and the Gratitude she ow'd his Passion, an Excuse for the Crime her own had influenced her to commit. In fine, the Morning found her as calm and compos'd as she had been the Night before the contrary; and if there was left in her Soul any Tincture of her former Disquiet, the Endearment s

ments of *Clitander*, and the Arguments he made use of to reconcile her to what had past between them, entire'y clear'd her of it, and made her willingly resign herself to frequent Repetitions of that guilty Joy, she had at first so much regretted.

In this Criminal Tranquility let us leave her for a while, and return to her Undoer: That cruel Brother, having thus satisfy'd the Cravings of his lawless Flame, and revell'd in the Spoils of violated Chastity, remained but a short Time contented with the Triumph he had gain'd, the Love of Money now resum'd its Empire in his sordid Soul; and as it was not so much the Possession of *Althea*'s Person as her Estate, which had induced him to take this Pains, so having obtained the one, he now began to set his whole Wits at Work to become Master of the other also. 'Tis true, he was not in that Anxiety of Mind he had been, because having the free Possession of *Althea*, he was pretty secure from any Apprehensions of her marrying, at least while he continu'd to treat her with that Tenderness which had so fatally seduc'd her; but being in all his Passions, except Avarice, extremely inconstant, he soon grew satiated with the unrestrain'd Enjoyment, and consequently weary of dissembling Ardours he cou'd no longer feel. ---- In those very Moments, when most he swore he lov'd he curst her in his Heart; and with his Vows of everlasting Fondness, mix'd Imprecations and Wishes for her Death, ----- had the Means of it, without Danger of Discovery, been in his Power, 'tis certain she had not long surviv'd her Lo's of Honour; but to the same Fears which had before Enjoyment been her Protection, was she still indebted to for her Safety; and tho' he was always contriving her Destruction,

tion, he cou'd not, with all the Invention he was Master of, find the Way to bring it about.

In this Dilemma he receiv'd a considerable Addition to the Perplexity he was before involved in, which was the Knowledge that *Althea* was with Child; the Dread which seiz'd his guilty Soul, whenever he considered how Difficult it would be to keep the incestuous Secret from Discovery, fill'd him with Horror almost proportioned to his Crime, — but so great a Master was he of Presence of Mind, that not all the Confusion of his Thoughts prevented him from prosecuting his Designs: He no sooner knew the Condition *Althea* was in, but to add to the Melancholy of it, he was continually filling her Ears with Stories of Women who had died in Child-birth, wou'd sometimes, in a well counterfeited Terrour tell her, he had heard a Weasel squeak, at others, that a Raven had perch'd upon the House, pretend some ominous Dream: In fine, scarce a Day pass'd over without his bringing her an account of some fabulous Prediction, till he wrought so far on the Weakness of her Sex, as to settle her in the Belief that she should not out-live the Time prefix'd by Nature for her being deliver'd of her Burthen. Having gain'd this Point, as he was sitting alone with her one Day, taking her by the Hand, and dissembling the most perfect Tenderness, My most ador'd, my forever dear *Althea*, said he, I have a Proposal to offer to you, which I have long wish'd to speak, but never had the Courage, fearing it shou'd encrease that Melancholly to which already you are but too much inclin'd, — but my Angel, continued he, if you wou'd but make use of your good Sense to arm you against these womanish Apprehensions, you wou'd not think your self nearer to Death for being prepar'd

prepar'd for it. Here he paus'd, expecting she
 wou'd desire an Explanation of these Words,
 which she immediately did, not a little surpriz'd
 what it was he meant by them. Since you com-
 mand me, resum'd he, I will no longer delay
 to reveal what for some Time has created me
 many Inquietudes. — Shou'd you, pur-
 su'd he, with a Sigh, which Heaven forbid, in
 giving Life to the dear Product of our Love,
 resign your own, the Estate you are posselt of
 must, of Consequence, you dying without a *Will*,
 descend to your Sister, and the Children born
 of her become the Inheritors, — it will not
 be in my Power to prevent it, and that most
 precious Pledge of the most fond Affection that
 ever filled the Heart of Man, must be a Beggar,
 a poor Dependant on an unhappy Father, who
 can do no more than make some mean Provision
 for it, as for the Child of some Acquaintance or
 remote Relation, while those begotten on *Mi-
 randa*, tho' far less dear, favour'd by Legitimacy,
 shall riot in the Plenty of your Lands, and look
 with Scorn on the wronged Babe, whose Birth-
 right makes them rich. — The Thought of
 this is worse than Death to me, and will be so
 to you, when once you come to know a Mo-
 ther's Pangs, a Mother's Tenderness and Care;
 — I wou'd have you, therefore, to provide
 against it, and by a *Testament* legally drawn and
 signed by Witnesses, cut off *Miranda*, and secure
 your Child from all those Injuries which Want
 Occasions. How can that be? interrupted *Al-
 thea*, we know not of what Sex the wretched
 Infant is, and in a *Will*, the Name, as well as
 Relative must punctually be set down. For that
 I have laid a Scheme, reply'd he rejoiced to
 find her in so compliable a Disposition, you shall
 bequeath your Lands, your Money, Jewels, and
 what-

whatsoever valuable Goods you have to a fictitious Person, ——— we may easily invent a Name; ——— and because it may be expected he should appear to claim the Benefit of the Will, I must be left *Trustee*, or if you please, his *Guardian*, and your *Executor*, ——— by this Means I shall have the Opportunity of doing Justice to my Child, since being my self, in Right of my Wife, next Heir, none has a Privilege to scrutinize into the Reasons of your having made so seemingly strange a *Will*; and thus will also, your Reputation, even after Death, remain unfully'd; and the worst the prying World can say, will be, that you were unnatural, and the Tenderness for that, which ought to be most dear, be taken for the Want of it, to your Sister. He said no more, nor indeed had he any Occasion for further, Arguments, what he had already urged appeared too reasonable for her to deny Assent: She very much approv'd, and thank'd his seeming Care, and the same Evening gave him Commission to go to a Lawyer, and have the *Will* drawn up according as he had advis'd.

Fortune, and the Credulity of the too fond *Althea* had hitherto crown'd all his Endeavours with Success, and he began now to think there was no difficulty which his Genius, Resolution, and the Fertility of his Invention cou'd not surmount. ——— He was not however, of the Disposition of some People, who lull themselves too soon in an imaginary Security, and transported with what they have already obtain'd, sit down enjoying the Reflection, contended before their Work is done: With the same indefatigable Industry with which he commenced his Designs, did he proceed to the Accomplishment of them. ——— Early as the Day did he arise next Morning,

Morning, and having given Directions to an able Attorney, what he would have done, in a small Time after, brought *Althea* a Parchment, which he told her was the *Will*, but which was in Reality, a Deed of Gift to himself, of all the Estate she was at that instant in Possession of. But because my Reader will doubtless be amaz'd for what Reason he went about to deceive her in this Manner, his Wife being the undoubted Heir, I must unravel the Bottom of his Aim, and set forth a Design so monstrous, as were there not too many whom the sad Catastrophe made acquainted with the Truth, wou'd scarce gain belief in any Mind, less prone to Villany than that of *Clitander*. Fir'd, as I have already said, with the repeated Possession of the Beauties of *Althea*, and burning with a yet unextinguished Passion for the Enjoyment of her Wealth, and to these two Motives for wishing her in another World being added, that of the Danger her Condition involved him in, of the Discovery of the Crime he had committed in debauching her, all together made him resolve to murder her, and to do it in such a Manner, as might have the Appearance of being acted by herself; — the Laws of the Nation depriving the Successors of Persons so desperate, of inheriting any Part of their Goods, he contrived to secure himself by a Deed of Gift, drawn up, dated and signed before there was any Appearance of her laying Hands on her Life.

But here, Heaven was pleas'd to put a Stop to his Proceedings, and what he thought wou'd be the most certain Means to secure the Accomplishment of his Hopes, proved the Ruin of them. — He came to *Althea*, and in a great Hurry, as if he fear'd the coming in of some Person who might interrupt what he was about

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to say, show'd her the Parchment, and unfolding only that Part of it where she should set her Hand, desir'd her to sign. Chance, more than Suspicion, made her desire to read it first; but that Demand a little alarming him, as not expecting she would scruple any Thing he requir'd, he was that Moment at a Stand how to reply, but recovering himself as well as he was able, told her there was no Occasion for her Perusal, for it was drawn up exactly as they had agreed, and that to look it over, wou'd take up more Time than she was aware of, and that probably her Sister, or some other of the Family might come up and catch her in that Employment. There is no Haste then, said she, for my signing it, — I shall scarce dye before to Morrow, and if you give it me, I will put it into my Cabinet, and read it when I am certain of no Interruption. Now was he indeed confounded, not all his Cunning or Assurance cou'd enable him presently to resolve what to do, in an Exigence so dangerous to all the Measures he had formed; to leave it with her was to proclaim himself the Villain he was in Reality, and to refuse, was to give her Room to guess there was something in it of a different Kind from what he had made her believe: Making a Virtue, therefore, of necessity, after a Moment's Thought, You do not consider, resumed he, of what ill Consequence it may be, to keep such a Thing by you, — it may be found, — some Accident may betray the Affair, — I wou'd have this Secret lodg'd beyond the Reach of Fate itself: — Remember, pursu'd he more eagerly, 'tis for your Child you do it, — shou'd you neglect a Thing of so much Consequence to its Welfare; the unborn Babe may live to curse its too remiss and unkind Parent. —

But,

But, added he, perceiving she look'd amaz'd to hear him talk in this Manner, if you imagine I have caus'd any Thing to be insert'd there which you can scruple to approve, I will sit down and read it to you. There may be more Danger in that, said she, than can be reasonably apprehended from lying in my Cabinet, — but you shall have your Will. In speaking these Words she shut the Door, and prepar'd herself to listen to him. The grave and determin'd Air with which she spoke and moved, made him easily perceive she was not perfectly pleas'd with his Behaviour; his natural Boldness, however, enabling him to go on, he unfolded the Parchment, shadding as well as he cou'd, with his Hand the Top of it, on which was written, *The Deed of Gift*, and began not to read, but to speak such Words as were suitable to the Instrument for which she had given Orders, what he utter'd being altogether different from the real Contents. The Hesitation of his Accents, and the Confusion which he could not keep from being visible in his Countenance, having created in her Suspicions, to which before her Heart was wholly a Stranger, with the utmost Watchfulness she observ'd his every Look and Motion, and taking Notice that he endeavour'd to conceal some Part of the Writing, and also glancing her Eyes over it, perceiving that his Tongue consulted his own Invention more than the Parchment, she was both convinc'd and shock'd at the Deceit with which he treated her; and nothing is more to be wonder'd at, than that she, so far from all Artifice herself, could all at once have her Eyes unseal'd to behold such monstrous Baseness and Hypocrisy in the Man, whose imaginary Honour and Fidelity she had forfeited all that was dear to her to reward, did not make her that Moment break out

out into some wild Extravagance of Rage, which thou'd have made him know his Wiles were now betray'd, and his deceiving Schemes no more cou'd boast their accustom'd Success.— 'Tis certain that her Soul was all Surprise, Relentment and Confusion, yet did she bridle the rising Passions, and tho' half suffocated, restrain'd the swelling Sighs, forbid her Tears to flow, or Tongue to vent the smallest Tittle of her Discovery or Indignation, till having done reading, he once more entreated her to sign. Yes said she, I will sign, but it shall be in Flames, as you hereafter must, for all the Miseries,— the eternal Ruin, your cursed Insinuations have brought on the undone *Althea*. These Expressions were accompany'd with a Torrent of Tears and at the same Time snatching the Parchment from his Hand, she threw it into a great Fire, which, the Weather being very cold, was then burning in the Room, where it was immediately consum'd. The Amazement in which this Action invol'd the Soul of *Clitander*, is not to be express'd; — he saw he was detected, and had nothing to alledge in his Excuse or Vindication, — the projecting Demons, who had prompted him to this Villany, now refus'd him their Assistance, — his once ready Wit and Invention now forsook him, — all his Powers abandon'd him, — his Eyes and Tongue forgot their usual Artifice, — Fear, shame and Horror sat on each unguarded Feature, and all the naked Criminal appear'd in View; — with down-cast Looks a while he stood silent, revolving in his Mind a thousand black and terrible Ideas: And she recovering herself a little from that Excess of Passion, which had before stop'd the Uterance of her Words, went on in her Upbraidings in this Manner, Ungenerous, mean Designer as thou art, said she, how little didst thou know the lavish Fondness of *Althea's* Soul, or thy own Power? —

had I been Mistress of all the Globe contains, and been made sensible *Clitander* wanted it, with Pleasure, I shou'd have yielded the unvalu'd Treasure, and thought my self more rich in his Acceptance, than in any other Blessing that Heaven and Fortune cou'd endow me with, — to that Degree I lov'd you, Words cannot speak how much, — no Description, — nothing but my Infatuation can set forth the vast Extent of that transcendent Passion with which I was inspir'd; — but know, it was not to your lovely *Person* alone you were indebted for the Proofs I gave you of it, — I figur'd you out to my admiring Soul as the most perfect Pattern of Fidelity and Honour, and thought I never cou'd too much acknowledge the Beauty of your *Mind*, — O! how have I been deceiv'd continu'd she, bursting a second Time into Tears, how cruelly has my unwary Innocence suffer'd itself to be impos'd on; — thou Monster of Hypocrisy, how wretched hast thou made me! The struggling Passions of her Soul made her unable to utter more, but what her Tongue fail'd to express, her streaming Eyes agonizing Tremblings abundantly made up for. *Clitander* with much ado forcing himself to look upon her, demanded of her, but with a Voice wholly unassur'd and broken, What it was she meant? An Interrogatory of this Kind, appear'd to her to have so much Impudence in it, that it seem'd wholly to dissipate her Grief, to make Way for a more stormy Passion: Rage had now the whole Possession of her Breast, and she answer'd him in Terms which fully convinc'd him, if before he had any Doubt of it, that she had discover'd the Artifice of the pretended *Will*, and also that it would be no easy Matter to bring her to Moderation: He attempted it however as much as his Disorders wou'd give him Leave; but the more he aim'd to excuse what he had done, the more she grew

grew incens'd; alledging, that tho' he had the highest Reasons for designing a *Deed of Gift* instead of a *Will*, which yet she cou'd not allow, she never cou'd forgive his Intention of deceiving her. ----- She told him, that since she found him capable of Artifice in one Thing, she doubted not but he had been so in all; and that she no more cou'd give Credit to any Thing that came from him. ---- All he cou'd say was ineffectual to move her from this Resolution, and he was oblig'd to leave her, having several Times been bid by her to leave the Room, without being able to work her to any Return of Softness or even to look on him with less Resentment than that which both her Eyes and Tongue declar'd at the Time of her throwing the Parchment into the Fire.

It wou'd be as needless as impossible, to set forth, as it deserves, the distracted State in which this Night was past, both by *Clitander* and *Altbea*, to be told what has happen'd between them, will better enable the Reader's Imagination to conceive their present Wretchedness than any Thing I am able to say. ----- The Deceiver and Deceiv'd felt equal Pains, the one in the Disappointment of his Designs, and Fears of something to ensue by this Discovery far worse: And the other, in Tenderness abus'd, and the Reflection on the incomparable Ruin her Inadvertancy had brought upon her, the most poynant Remorse was now the Portion of her Soul; and Dread, and the sharpest Stings of Guilt and Horror his.

The Condition of the perfidious *Clitander* was so much the more perplex'd than that of *Altbea*, by the Addition of Uncertainty in what Manner he should proceed; while that unhappy Lady, in the Midst of her Grievs found some little Ease in Resolution, and determin'd to quit a House which had been so fatal to her Virtue and her Peace; and

Iustly detesting the Sight of her Undoer, as soon as she was inform'd *Miranda* was stirring, she sent to desire she would come into her Chamber, who immediately complying with her Request, she told her, That finding herself of late very much indispos'd she believ'd it owing to the Town Air, which by Reason she was not accusom'd to live in, did not agree with her Constitution, and that she would return to her Country Seat, at least, till she had recover'd her former Health. Her present Condition having render'd her Looks more pale and wan than ordinary, contributed to make this Excuse pass current; and her Sister, tho' extreamly concern'd to loose the Pleasure of her Company, thought it would seem rather an Argument of Self-love than the contrary, to press her Stay.

While the two Sisters were engag'd in this Conversation, *Clitander*, who was alone in the Dining-room, was in all the Agonies which Guilt or Fear can inflict; he had heard *Althea's* Servant desire his Wife to come to her Mistress, and he knew not but the Violence of that Rage with which she was animated against him, might oblige her to relate the whole Story of their Intreague to her Sister. He was sensible, that Passion of what Kind soever, has small Regard to Prudence; especially in a Female Mind, and began to accuse himself of Weakness, that he had not put an End to his Apprehensions, by depriving her of the Power of Complaining, — with how much Ease, said he to himself might I have strangled or smother'd the fond Reproacher, as soon as I perceiv'd she took upon her to pry into my Meanings — I might have left her breathless, to be found by the first comer into the Room, — the Aft wou'd have appear'd her own, — No-body wou'd have suspected me, — perhaps my wife might have made the first Discovery, and the Shock of such a Sight might
have

have been fatal too to her, and I had been rid of both at once, — Fool that I was, and too, too careless of my own Safety, Interest, or Reputation, — thou'd her wild Rage disclose the fatal Secret, I am undone in all without Redemption lost to all the Views of my aspiring Soul, nay pointed at, and hiss'd as I pass by the demure Inhabitants of this well-order'd City. In this Manner did he torment himself, till seeing the Servants run busily up and down the House, he call'd to know the Meaning of this unusual Hurry, and was by one of them inform'd, that *Althea* being to go out of Town, they were employ'd in packing up her Things, and preparing for her Departure. If he was before alarm'd, he now was much more so; this sudden Removal made him not doubt but that she had betray'd every Thing, and unable to endure the just Upbraidings he expected to meet from both these injur'd Ladies, he flew out of the House immediately, resolving not to return till the Absence of one of them might the better encourage him to deny the whole Affair to the other.

He had been but just gone out, when *Miranda* came into the Room where she had left him, to acquaint him with her Sister's Resolution, and missing him, sent every Where in Search of him, to take Leave of *Althea*: But he was no where to be found, he went a quite contrary Way from any Place where he could be expected, and came not Home till very late at Night.

The wretched *Althea* found a Kind of gloomy Satisfaction, that she was not obliged to dissemble a Civility to the Author of her Ruin, and made what Haste she could away, lest any of those sent to seek him should succeed in their Endeavours: But he returning not till Night, was immediately eas'd of his Apprehensions, by the Person that open'd the Door, who acquainted him with the fruitless Search which had been made for him,
and

and the Reason of it. A little more compos'd now in Mind, he had the Power of inventing an Excuse to his Wife for his running away in so abrupt a Manner, which she, wholly free from any Suspicion of the Truth, readily believ'd.

The villanously bent *Clitander* cou'd not, however, be satisfied while there remained even a Possibility of his Crime being made known; he resolv'd therefore, by some Means or other to put an End to *Althea*, whose Life he look'd on as a continual Danger; but as there was no Opportunity to compals this Design while they were at Variance, he endeavour'd by his former Artifices to gain a Reconciliation. She had not left his House three Days, before he sent her the following Letter.

To the most Lovely, but too Rigorous *Althea*.

BT this, I hope, Passion has had Time to cool, and Reason has got the Better of unjust Resentment. — Oh ! cou'd I e'er have thought *Althea*, who seem'd all heavenly Softness, would have so far been deafn'd by her mistaken Rage, as not to hear *Clitander*, her once lov'd *Clitander* plead ! — I confess indeed, that I deceived you as to the Title of the Instrument you had order'd me to get drawn up, but the Design was still the same ; and it appear'd to me, and to the Lawyer, whose Advice I took, to be more firm and valid this Way than that other we had agreed on : The Motives which induc'd me to it are too long to be insert'd here, but if you will permit a Visit from me, I can easily convince you that what I did was wholly owing to my Care to that dear Babe, which next to its charming Mother, must be most precious to my

my Soul. — Oh! my fir ever lov'd, — for ever ador'd Althea, tho' I doubt not but I shall bear you own you have been to blame, and with your usual Softness avow Clitander's Truth, yet the Remembrance that I have been once suspected by you, will be an eternal Vulture to my aking Heart.

— Confidence, as it is the greatest Proof of a perfect Passion, so it is also the highest Blessing of it; Resume it then thou dear unjust Disturber of thy own Repose, and know Clitander better than to admit one Thought to the Prejudice of his Love or Honour; the incanting Charms which dwell upon thy Mind and Person render it impossible for me to falsify the one, and the Principles in which my Youth was bred wou'd make me chuse Death rather than be guilty of sinning against the other; — how much then hast thou injured me, Althea! — What Torments has thy unkind Distrust inflicted on me! — My Soul, which flatter'd itself with the Belief it held so perfect an Intelligence with thine, that whatsoever passed in one Breast was to the other known, now starts with wild Amaze, and all its Faculties seem lost in Grief and Wonder. — O haste to cure the Wounds thy Cruelty has caused, and let the Balsam of returning Love restore once more Clitander to himself, — fir I am nothing, while deprived of thee, but a poor walking Statue, discovered but by Dispair to have any Remains of Sense or Reason left. — Write to me some Lines of Comfort, and consent to receive once more into thy Esteem, into thy Sight, into thy Arms, the most ardent and sincerest Lover that ever owned the Power of Beauty; — be doubly kind to make me Reparation for the Wrong thou hast done me, and know that it is the fixed Determination of my

Mind to dye if you persist in this Injustice, it being better not be at all, than not to be

The Divine Althea's

CLITANDER.

Whoever has been acquainted with the Force of Love, need not be told what kind of Emotions those are, which of Consequence swell the Bosom of a Person in the Circumstances *Althea* was; never had Woman been possess'd of a more violent Passion than she was for *Clitander*, nor could any Heart be capable of a greater Resentment than was hers, since the Discovery of his Deceit; she cou'd not read those tender Expressions he had made use of in his Letter, without a Flood of forgiving Softness pouring in upon her Soul; nor could she reflect afterwards that it was possible they might be only owing to that Artifice, with which he had attempted to impose on her Credulity, without an Addition to the Rage she was before inspir'd with. — At some Times she was inclin'd to hear what he could alledge in his Vindication, at others, not to admit of any Excuse; and what she endured in the Conflict, between Tenderness and Indignation, is not to be described; the former, however, got at length the Victory; and the same fatal Softness which had at first betrayed her, now sway'd her Inclinations to a second yielding, and all the Remains of Severity she had left was, not to let him immediately be sensible of his Power and her own Weakness and Irresolution. If not so guilty as I at first believ'd, said she to herself, he yet has been to blame in endeavouring to deceive a Heart he might have persuad'd. — He shall not, therefore, know my Easiness to pardon,

don, — I will write to him with the same Rigour with which I spoke when last we parted. Nor can I err in this, if he be in Reality true, the faithful Lover he pretends, his Constancy will abide this little Trial; and if (as 'tis too possible, that he who could be false in one Thing may in others also) the seeming Softness of these Lines should all be counterfeit, and a second Imposition, I shall at least prevent him of the Triumph he expects. Thus did this unhappy Victim of an ungovernable Passion, argue with herself, and fancied no Body could arrive at a greater Height of Heroism, than she was Mistress of, in so far restraining the Dictates of her Tenderness, as to be able to answer him in these Terms.

To the Thankless and Ungenerous
Clitander.

IF any Thing could have added to the Astonishment which the Discovery of your Perfidiousness created, it would be to find you still entertain an Opinion of me so contrary to what I am, or ought to be. — No, no Clitander; it is not in the Power of all your Artifices to deceive me twice; — to know you have been false in one Thing, convinces me there is a Possibility you may be so in all; and, as you too justly for your own Interest observe, Confidence alone makes Love a Blessing; as your Behaviour, therefore, has taken from me the one, I must endeavour to expect the other also, or be for ever wretched. — Am I not undone, — ruin'd beyond Redemption — by my unhappy Passion reduc'd to a Condition in which Life, Honour, Reputation, every Thing that is dear must be exposed to Dangers, infinite and numberless.

yet in this dreadful Hazard of my Soul what had I to comfort me but thy believ'd Integrity, and that thou hast destroy'd; and I am now all Misery and Despair, without one cheering Hope, one Dawn of Consolation. ——— Oh! why Clitander would you abuse a Faith so entirely dependant as was mine? ——— If there were Reasons for altering the intended Will into a Deed of Gift, why was I not acquainted with them? ——— Heavens! when I reflect with what a zealous Haste you press'd my tardy Hand to sign that Writing, and with what a ready Cunning you turned the Words so much the Reverse of what they were, it makes you seem, to my distracted Thought, a Man long practis'd in Deceit, vers'd in Hypocrisy, and skill'd in every Wile of your betraying Sex. ——— Oh what a dismal Change is this from that dear Character which won me first to Tendernefs, and made me think all Things a Virtue which thy Love required. ——— But to what End does my afflicted Soul thus pour forth her Complaining, if thou art false, thou wilt but scorn my Grievs; if true, they are unjust; ——— Oh that they were, and that indeed I cou'd in the Assurance they were so, confess I did amiss, and once more subscribe my self,

The too lovely Clitander's

ALTHEA.

Having concluded this Epistle, she read it over, and thinking some Part of it express'd too great a Tendernefs, to prevent him from entertaining any Hopes, which might be too presuming, she added a Postscript which contained these Words:

I would not have you imagine, that because my Heart still owns some Softnefs at the Remembrance
of

of our former Loves, that it can so much overpower my Reason as to sway me to any Thoughts of a Reconciliation, at least, as yet, — Time, and your future Behaviour can only decide what it is I ought to do. — Make no Endeavours therefore for an Interview, lest you should alarm a Resentment, which you deceive your self when you believe is lull'd asleep.

Farewel.

Clitander had too often experienced the Irresolution of a Female Mind when agitated by that undoing Passion, not to see *Althea* was as much his own as ever, and that there wanted but a few Oaths and tender Pressures to compleat what his Letter had begun: But as all the Ardours of Desire were now extinguished in him, and he no longer aim'd at the Enjoyment of her, he would not seem too forward in his Hopes; his Design being only to keep her Mind in Play, till he should get an Opportunity to rid himself at once of all his Fears, by making her away. Continuing therefore to counterfeit the despairing Lover, soon after the Receipt of hers he sent a second Billet, the Contents whereof were as follows.

To the Dear, Unkind *Althea*.

IF you had ever any Reason for Surprize in the Behaviour of Clitander, it is only now to find he is yet alive after so terrible a Testimony of your Indifference, as that your Letter gave me. — Yes, thou relentless, thou tyrannick Charmer, I yet survive the Loss of Love, but in a Condition, such as were there not a Power whose Indignation is more than even *Althea's* to be dreaded, would make

make me gladly fly to Death for Ease. — Were I, indeed, the false, the perjured Wretch you think me, how little Effect would your Displeasure have! — Nay, how satisfied would some inconsistent Lovers be of such a Pretence to part! — But, Oh Althea! I am not of that Number, my Heart wholly made up of Truth and Tenderneſs, diſavows the Maxims of my Sex, and doats upon thee, thou Soul of Pleaſure, with the ſame un-ſatiated Fondneſs, as when I firſt received the glorious Recompence of my Pains, and triumphed in Poſſeſſion of thy Beauties. — How often have I thought our Minds were pair'd by Heaven, and that we two were choſe from the unnumbered Millions of Mankind, to prove the Immortality of a perfect Paſſion. No Woman ſure, but my Althea, could ever inſpire ſuch Raptures; no Man but her Clitander, could be ſo ſenſible of her Power of charming. — Ob think upon the bliſſful Moments of our Love! — bring back in Idea our paſt Endearments! remember to what a vaſt Exceſs of unreſtrained Delight we have been transported; and while the extatick Image is in View, judge of the Fervour of Clitander's Flame. — Didſt thou deceive me with pretended Softneſs, and play the Hypocrite in Pleaſure? O no! thy Raptures were ſubſtantial and ſincere; nor could the Soul, when thus diſſolv'd in Joy, find Room for feigning. — Were mine ſo enervate, that thou canſt doubt their Truth? — Thou dear unjuſt Diſturber! to thy own Heart let me appeal, by that I will be acquitted or condemn'd. — Grant a ſpeedy Answer to my Prayers, but conſider, that on what you write depends the Fate of,

Tour Impatient Slave,

CLITANDER.

What

What now became of *Althea's* Resolution ! her Soul, unus'd to Artifice, no longer could restrain its struggling Tenderness, each thrilling Vein confess'd rekindled Passion ; and the soft Fire diffus'd itself through every glowing Fibre : -- No more had she the Power to conceal Desire, no more could listen to the Dictates of Reason or Resentment, and again melted by those destructive Languishments which had at first betrayed her Virtue ; she suffered her Pen to convince him of a Truth, which before he had little Cause to doubt, and wholly forgetful of all Considerations but those her Love inspir'd, answer'd him in this Manner.

To the too Charming *Clitander*.

BT what magick Spells, thou dear Enchanter dost thou work upon my Soul ! how in a Moment is it in thy Power to reverse my most fix'd Resolves, new-form my Mind, and as thou pleasest tune every jarring Thought ! in Spite of all I had determin'd, in Spite of the Suggestions of my Reason, which tell me, this second Folly is more shameful even than the former, I confess the Prevalence of thy too fatal Charms, and once more own my self all thine. ---- O why *Clitander* ! dost thou alarm Reflection with the Remembrance of those ruinous Delights which I had sworn to taste no more ; am I not already too guilty without adding Perjury to the Number of my Offences ? ----- Will not all the Pleas of Love and Nature appear too weak to excuse my Crimes, and bribe the Justice of that dread Tribunal, to which, perhaps, I shortly shall be summon'd ? ----- O ! exert thy utmost Wit and Eloquence to arm me against this Thought, and reconcile the two great Opposites, Desire and Virtue,

tue, — with healing Arguments, if possible, ease my Despair, and keep me, while on Earth, from sharing the Torments the Damn'd endure. But first; for O! there's no Hell like that of thy Perfidiousness, convince me that my Fears were groundless, and that there was, indeed, no other Motive but our common Interest for that Alteration in the intended Legacy, the sooner I hear your Reasons, the sooner my Inquietudes will cease; but be sure to come prepar'd with such as shall entirely banish all Distrust of their Validity; and give me no Pretence to be any other than what I wish myself,

My Dear, Ador'd Clitander's

ALTHEA.

If *Clitander's* Entreaty for a Reconciliation had sprung from a Desire of re-enjoying her, he had now sufficient to fit him for the utmost Transports; but alas! the Pleasure her Condescension yielded, was of a far different Kind from that which Love inspires: Her Death, which he now found was the only Means both to ease him of all his Fears of Discovery, and to give him the Possession of her Estate, was what he wanted; and the Opportunity her recover'd Kindness promis'd him of executing that horrid Purpose spread a sullen Satisfaction over all his Soul: The Means he had projected to bring it about was in this Manner:

He had for a great While had an Intimacy with a neighbouring Apothecary, which he improv'd during the Time of his holding this distant Correspondence with *Althea*, but still preserving his old Maxim of depending only on himself, would not let him into any Part of his Designs,

signs, but taking all Occasions of running into his Shop, and talking with him in a free Manner, would sometimes ask him what was in one Drawer, and sometimes what was in another; which Intelligence, joyn'd with his own Understanding in the *Latin* Tongue, made him perfectly acquainted with the Name and Nature of most of those Drugs which furnish out one of those Shops. Amongst the Number there was one on which he kept a constant Eye; his Friend had told him it was a Poison of that deadly Quality, that without the Person who should take it, had very well prepared his Body by extraordinary Antidotes, all the Art in the World had not the Power to expel. This was a Dose proper for the Design of this Remorseful's Wretch, and he resolv'd to play the Thief for some Portion of it, the first Moment Fortune should present him with an Opportunity: According to his Desires he soon met one, the Apothecary happening to be abroad one Day when he came there, and no Person in the Shop but a young Apprentice, whom he sent out on some Pretence, he ran immediately to the Drawer, and taking out a sufficient Quantity of that fatal Drug, put it into a Piece of Paper, and conceal'd it in his Pocket-book.

Being thus in Possession of the Treasure he so much coveted, he wanted nothing but the Means of applying it, which also he obtained in a short Time: The Anniversary of *Miranda's* Birth-day happening a Day or two after that, in which he had received that tender Letter from her Sister, he thought he could not chuse a fitter Season for the Accomplishment of his cruel Aim: With a well counterfeited Tendernefs, he therefore told that unsuspecting Wife, that he would keep that Day with a Solemnity proportionable
to

to the Tenderneſs he had for her, and accordingly ſent Invitations to all the Friends on both Sides to come to his Houſe and partake of an Entertainment he ordered to be provided in Honour of the Day: And at the ſame Time wrote a private Billet to *Althea*, conjuring her not to fail being there, telling her that if ſhe attempted to evade it by any Excuse, it might create ſome Suspicion among the Relations, that there was not ſo good an Agreement between them as uſual; and as there was a Time approaching, in which ſhe would be oblig'd to abſcond, it would be beſt for her to appear as long as her Condition would permit; eſpecially at a Time when her Abſence would be look'd on as a Thing ſo particular, that every one would be apt to inquire into the Cauſe. But he needed not have given himſelf the Trouble of urging ſo many Arguments, the Deſire ſhe had of ſeeing him again, was a ſufficient Inducement of her coming, and now not doubting, becauſe he had told her ſo, but that at their next private Meeting he would be able to clear himſelf of every Thing ſhe could lay to his Charge, was eaſily perſuaded to admit the Reconciliation, before ſhe received the Reaſons for it. In fine, the Day being arriv'd, *Clitander* had the Pleaſure of ſeeing his intended Prey readily fall into the Snare prepared for her; and the Succeſs of his Deſigns made his Eyes ſparkle with a Delight, which the deceived *Althea* obſerving, imagin'd was owing to Love and Tenderneſs. There was too much Company to give them any Opportunity for Converſation, but ſuch as was general; but what was denied to their Tongue, their ſpeaking Looks ſeem'd abundantly to make up for. — Unutterable Joy appeared to revel amidſt the ſoft Beſeechings of his Glances, while her's ſtream'd with

Ten

Ten Thousand nameless Languishments, the Badges of Desire, and Symptoms of a Soul dissolv'd.

After a magnificent Collation they went to Country-dancing, where this perfidious Wretch having *Althea* for his Partner, resolv'd no longer to delay the Execution of his abhor'd Intent, and taking the Opportunity of being the lower Couple, step'd to the *Beaufett*, and filling out a Glas of Wine, drank to her, with these Words: May this blest Moment, said he, put an End to all Distrust between us, and be the Beginning of an everlasting Peace to both. With how much Joy I pledge that Health, Thou who knowest my Soul, be Judge, reply'd she; at the same Time looking on him with Eyes so sweetly languishing, that any Heart but his would have relented and melted with Tenderness and Penitence: Yet was he all obdurate and unshock'd, no Starts, no Tremblings confess'd the guilty Secret, no Change of Countenance betray'd the horrid Purpose he was about to act, but keeping the curst Drug conceal'd between his Thumb and Finger, as he was pouring out the Wine, dropt it into the Glas unperceiv'd, unsuspected by the unhappy *Althea*, who took it from his remorseless Hand, and drank it to the Bottom.

They continued dancing a considerable Time, nor had the Company any Design of breaking up, when *Althea* finding herself extremely disordered, surprized them with taking a hasty Leave. *Miranda* perceiving she was indisposed, would have persuaded her to lye there, or to suffer some of her People to wait on her Home; but she refused both, imagining that her Illness proceeded only from her being lac'd more strait that Day than ordinary, to conceal the Alteration in her Shape, from giving any Suspicion of the Condition which had occasion'd it. No-body looking

on her Distemper as dangerous, they suffer'd her to depart, without giving any Interruption to the Gaity, which *Clitander* took Care nothing shou'd be wanting to inspire among them.

But this abus'd Lady had not gone many Streets, before she found her Pains increase in so terrible a Manner, that she was unable to sustain them, without endeavouring some Relief. ——— She knew there were many Months between that, and the Time in which she must expect those Agonies which all, in becoming Mothers, feel; and incapable of ascribing any Cause for what she endured, call'd out to the Coach-man to stop at the House of an Apothecary, who on all Occasions was us'd to attend their Family, and liv'd in the Way she was to pass. Happening to find him at Home, she suffer'd herself to be led into a Parlour, where she was no sooner set down, but she found herself grow worse; and in a few Moments swell'd to that prodigious Degree, that her Laceings burst, her Eyes seem'd to start out of her Head, and every Feature was distorted. The skilful Apothecary immediately cry'd out that she was poison'd, and ran to fetch Things proper to expel it, but the Malignity had spread itself too far, and all that he could do was ineffectual: Fearing, however, to depend on his own Art, he sent for an eminent Physician to come there, she now being in a Condition which would not admit of her being remov'd: But on the first Sight of her, he made no Scruple of revealing the sad Truth, That it was not in the Power of Art to save her. Is it then certain, said she, that I must dye? Nothing less than a Miracle can preserve you, Madam, answered he. These Words pronounced with a grave and assured Accent, joyn'd to the intollerable Pains which every Moment increas'd
upon

upon her, made her not doubt, but that her Condition was desperate indeed; and in the Extremity of her Anguish, forgetful of all other Considerations but those which the Horrour of her Fate inspir'd, she cry'd aloud, that all in the House were Witnesses of the Exclamations, Then I am poison'd by *Clitander*, that murderous Villain has kill'd both the Life and Honour of the lost *Althea*: — Oh! I am doubly damn'd, first by the Crime he drew me to commit, and next by my Knowledge to what a Monster I have sacrificed my Virtue. — Such Expressions seem'd to have a Meaning in 'em too dreadful not to make those who heard them press her to explain herself more fully; both the Doctor and Apothecary entreated she would give them the Particulars of what she seem'd to intimate, but could get nothing from her but the same Words several Times repeated; perceiving that either her bodily Torments, or those of her Mind, had driven her into a Kind of Despair, they ask'd her if she was not willing to consult a Spiritual Physician: To which she replied, That she was past all Hope of Relief, either in this World, or that to which she was going; and immediately fell into Ravings so horrible and shocking, that they imprinted a Terror on the Minds of those present, which for a great While they were not able to wear off. Never did the Idea of Futurity appear so dreadful, as that which her Behaviour inspir'd; nor never came Death accompanied with Torments such as hers. — The most guilty Wretch that suffers the Sentence of the Law, has, with the Certainty of his Fate, a Time for Preparation for it allowed him, but she had none, taken in the very Fullness of her Crimes; and by those racking Pains which every convuls'd Nerve, and starting Vein sustain'd, render'd incapable of Penitence,
of

of Prayer or Consolation. A Minister of that Religion she profess'd being sent for, he exhorted her by all the Admonitions he was capable of making, to endeavour to compose her Mind, and throw herself on the Mercy of All-gracious Heaven, but she would not suffer him to speak on that Head. — Talk not of Mercy, said she, I have sinned beyond the Reach of Pardon, — I am already damn'd, wou'd she sometimes roar out, — a Thousand Fiends encompass me about. — they wait to seize my Soul; — and then again, more wildly, Now, now I burn, cry'd she, now feel the Flames which are decreed for Adultery and Incest. In this Manner did she continue all that Night, and early in the Morning the Apothecary thinking it proper not to conceal the Condition she was in, sent a Person whom he cou'd confide in, to the House of *Clitander*, to acquaint *Miranda* with the fatal News.

That Lady being yet in Bed, the Messenger, who said he must needs speak to her that Moment, was order'd to come into her Chamber, where having told her in what Manner he left her Sister, and related some Part of those Expressions her Despair had made her utter, reduc'd her to a Condition almost as pityable. She fainted away several Times while she was preparing to make herself ready to go; and indeed it is rather to be wonder'd at, that in so dreadful a Juncture, and in so unconceivably terrible a Surprise, that she retain'd Strenth enough of Mind, to bear the Sight of what she heard, than that she endur'd so much in the attempting it. She arriv'd not however at the Scene of misery till her unhappy Sister was no more: The Moment of her Entrance, was that in which the afflicted Soul forsook its wretched Mansion, leaving that once lovely and Desire-creating Form, the most terrible and ghastly Spectacle, that ever made the

View

View of Death a Horror. *Miranda* was for some Time incapable either of making any Demands, or listning to any Informations, but as soon as she was in a Condition, receiv'd from the Mouths of the Divine, the Doctor, the Apothecary, and all his Family, a Confirmation of what the Messenger had said. The Reader's Imagination must here assist my Pen, or it will be impossible for him to form any just Notion of what she endur'd in the killing Repetition of so dreadful an Account. I shall only say, that she sustain'd it with Life, and that was all. It was the Opinion of every Body that *Althea* shou'd be open'd, to which, it being propos'd to *Miranda*, she consented; nor would leave the House till it was done, still hoping that the Surgeons who perform'd that Operation, might find some other Cause than Poison for her Death: But alas! how terrible a Surcharge to her Afflictions did she receive, when they acquainted her, that that fair Unfortunate not only receiv'd her Death by those Means the Doctor and Apothecary had said, but also, that she was with Child; and to prove the Truth of what they told her, presented her with an Embrio of at least Six Months Growth. This wretched, yet still tender Wife, had now no Comfort left, but in the distant Possibility that her Husband might be wrong'd, and that in Spite of what the Deceas'd had declar'd, some other Man might have been the Father of the Child, and Author of this double Murder; but soon this Shadow of a Consolation fled, and she became all Misery and Despair: Remembering that when she first came into the Room, she saw a Pocket-Book of her Sister's lying on the Ground, she desir'd it might be search'd for, imagining that there might be something which wou'd give her a further Discovery of what she wish'd, yet dreaded to be assur'd. According-
ly

ly it did ; for it being immediately produc'd, she found, to the inexpressible Shock of all those Hopes with which she endeavour'd to flatter herself, those two Letters before inserted here, and that last fatal one which drew her wretched Sister to her Destiny. — Which, to satisfy the Curiosity of my Reader, and more to expose the monstrous Villany of the impious Clitander, I will also give a Copy of.

To the most Excellent *Althea*.

WITH what Words, O thou Perfection of all Loveliness ! shall I make you sensible of the Extasies that fill'd my ravish'd Soul, at the forgiving Goodness of your last charming Letter ; — Sure I am, no Language can reach the vast Extent of Love and Joy like mine ! — The unequal'd Softness of thy own endearing Thoughts can best inform thee what thy Clitander feels in this Restoration of his long languishing, and almost expiring Hopes ! — Desire, sunk to Despair, revives and gladdens with redoubled Ardour ! — O how I long to read in those dear Eyes the blest Confirmation of what thy Pen declares. — Soon would I fly to seize the Transport, but that the Birthday of Miranda being so near, I take that Opportunity, under the Pretence of Tenderness to her, to celebrate my Reconciliation with Althea. — O may that Day put a Period to all future Misunderstandings between us, and compleat Clitander's Happiness. — I beg you, by all the Tenderness you have profess'd, and which still sways your gentle Soul, to commiserate my Pains, not to sail blessing me with your Presence on that Day : You know, my Angel, that a Time will shortly arrive in which you must be obliged to shun the Converse of your Friends, and it will be of Service to your Reputation,

tion, as well as to my eager Wishes, for you to appear as long as possible: Should you be absent, not only your own distant Relations, but also Miranda herself would be surpris'd; and who knows on what Enquires it might put some People? But that Motive, which I flatter my self will most induce you to comply is, that it is entreated by him, who I hope you soon will cease to doubt if he is,

The most adorable Althea's

truest and everlasting Slave,

CLITANDER.

To know what kind of Emotions those were which swell'd the Breast of this distress'd Lady, at reading these Letters, which she too well knew were written by her Husband's Hand, one must be in the Circumstances she was; but it is notwithstanding very easy to guess her Agonies were the most terrible that Humanity could support. She had lov'd him with too sincere a Tenderness for even this plain Detection of his Villany presently to obliterate, she could not resolve to prosecute him in that Manner which his Crime deserv'd, yet was not so blinded by her Passion, as to forget what she ow'd to the Memory of her injur'd Sister, the Wrong he had done herself, and indeed the just Care of her own future Safety, as to think of living with a Monster, who she now found would scruple nothing. Making therefore very few Replies to the Invectives she heard utter'd against him, nor speaking any Thing of the Discovery which the Letters had made, she took her Leave of the Apothecary, telling him that he should hear further from her, and withdrew to the House of a Relation, who had formerly been her Guardian; whence

whence she sent by a Porter the following Billet to her perfidious Husband.

I Need not tell you that *my Sister is no more,* you know but too well that she could not live, and doubtless are by this Time inform'd that I was sent for, to see the last of that unhappy Wretch. — I believe you will scarce expect my Return to a Place, where I must every Day behold a Villain, who not content with murdering her Honour, took away also her Life, with that of the innocent Product of his incestuous Passion. — I wish to Heaven the dreadful Secret were only known to me, but in the Agonies of her departing Soul herself declar'd it to too many, for you, I fear, to escape the Punishment your Guilt deserves: — Take Care, therefore, of your self, for you will stand in Need of all your Wit and Artifice to shield you from the Sword of Justice. — This Caution is the last Proof of Kindness you will ever receive from

Your greatly injur'd and

unfortunate Wife,

MIRANDA.

Early as it was in the Morning, when the Person sent by the Apothecary came to *Miranda*, *Clitander* uneasy till he knew the Consequence of the last Night's Action, had forsook his Bed, and was gone to give a Loose to Thought in a retir'd Walk, which he very much frequented, but not being able to rest there, he went from Coffee-House to Coffee-House, endeavouring, but in vain, some Cessation of his perplexed Imaginations; at length returning home, was told in what Manner *Miranda* had been called out, and the

the Condition she was in at some News brought by the Person who came to her: This fill'd him with mortal Disquiets, which the Receipt of the foregoing Letter confirm'd. He had hop'd the Poison would have taken Effect, and destroy'd her in a more sudden Manner, and began now to be apprehensive, that all the Secrecy he had made use of would stand him but in little Stead.

As for his Wife's Resentment, it gave him but little Pain, since he perceived she would not appear as an Evidence against him; he thought it best however to take the Advice she gave him, and withdraw, till he should hear if any Thing was design'd against him or not, and accordingly went out of Town that very Night, entrusting not one with the Place of his Retirement, but a near Relation, to whom he also committed the Care of his House, and who sent him from Time to Time an Account of every Thing, and received his Instructions how to proceed.

Miranda declining the Prosecution of her Husband, those to whom *Althea* had declared the fatal Mystery of his Guilt, were the only Persons whom *Clitander* had Reason to fear; and on being inform'd that they talked pretty freely of the Affair, and mingled some Menaces with their Discourse of it, gave Orders to his Friend to act in this Manner: He went to each of them, and acquainting them with the Knowledge he had of their Suspicions, and the Reasons they had for it, told them they ought not to judge by Appearances; that in Case *Clitander* were guilty, there was no Possibility of proving him so, the Lady who had accus'd him having been lunatick for some Time before her Death; and besides, it was wholly inconsistent with Reason to believe him both her Lover and her Poisoner; it seem'd more probable, that being with Child, to conceal her Shame she had taken something to destroy it,

which had work'd an Effect contrary to what she design'd, than that it should be given her by any other Person : And concluded these Arguments with a Remonstrance, that to go about to prosecute a Man for a Crime, of which at most he could but be suppos'd guilty, would only involve the Persons who did it, in a great deal of Trouble, and be of no Service either to restore the Life, or revenge the Death of the Person for whose Sake they undertook it. These Considerations, by Degrees made an Impression in the Minds of those to whom they were address'd, which, together with every one having Business which was more their own, join'd to make the Ghost of this wrong'd Lady remain yet unappeas'd, and the wicked *Clitander* triumph in the Belief, That neither Heaven nor Earth will take any further Notice of his Crimes.

For the Sake of his Reputation, however, he made use of all his Cunning to be reconcil'd to his Wife; and might, perhaps, have impos'd on her Belief as much as on that of others, had not the Letters found in the dead *Althea's* Pocket-Book, been an undeniable Witness of his Guilt. — She keeps them by her, and daily reads them over, to preserve in Memory his Offences, and prevent his Artifices from the Succession he aims at. The Knowledge how much he is in the Power of one he has so highly injur'd, is a perpetual Rack upon his Spirits, and in infinitely more reasonable Apprehensions of Danger on her Account, than ever he had on that of *Althea*; While here, he suffers a Taste of that Bitterness of Soul, which in greater Abundance he must hereafter swallow to all Eternity; having reap'd no other Advantage from all the monstrous Villanies he has acted, than an Augmentation of those Disquiets which an unsatiated Avarice creates.

F I N I S.





THE
PADLOCK:
OR
NO GUARD without VIRTUE.
A
NOVEL.



IN the City of *Sevil* lived a Gentleman call'd *Don Lepidio*, who having continued a Batchelor till a pretty advanc'd Age, in his Decline of Youth and Vigour, when, as the famous *Shakespear* says, one would have thought the high Day of his Blood had been over, he became enamoured of a young Beauty, who, after some little Time in Courtship, was compell'd by the Av-
rice

rice of her Parents to marry him : His Possessions were extreamly large, and they render'd by Misfortunes to low Circumstances, were glad to embrace this Opportunity.

Notwithstanding the Aversion that *Violante* (for that was her Name) had to this Match, her Virtue and Discretion made her not only submit, without any Show of Dislike, but also resolve to be contented, if possible, and not by struggling render her Fetters uneasy, she conformed herself to his Humours, always acquiescing to what he said, and in every Affair of Life made his Will the sole Guide and Standard of her Actions.

Happy might he have been, had he but taken proper Methods to wear out that Disaffection which naturally arises from a Disparity of Years; but conscious of his own Demerit, and too little acquainted with the real Generosity of her Soul, his Behaviour was not only disobliging, but provoking to a Woman of Spirit. Never was a Prisoner under Sentence confin'd with greater Strictness; he debarr'd her the Society of her nearest Relations Women as well as Men, permitted not even her Father Confessor to be alone with her, let her have no Male Servants, but such whole Deformity made the Eye ake to look at; and, as if all these Restrictions were not sufficient to secure her Virtue, he oblig'd her to wear one of those Machines, which in other Countries are so much ridicul'd. This Distrust made her extreamly discontented, and seeing that all the Effects of her Prudence were in vain, and that he depended intirely on his own Caution of her Honour, gave her Notions of him, that not only rendred her the most miserable Creature living, but made her very indifferent.

She



She no longer studied either to continue his Affections, or encrease her own; but looking on him as unworthy both of her Love and Esteem, behav'd in a Manner that left him no Room to doubt how disagreeable he was; and not considering how much his ill Usage had contributed to it, he reflected on her Want of conjugal Affection. The Disgust between them grew at last so high, that not all the Efforts of Virtue and Duty could restrain her from thinking of him with a perfect Hate; and those Endearments which she at first but feigned grew now so detestable, that it was only by Compulsion he enjoyed her as his Wife. The Rites of Marriage can only be term'd blest when excited by mutual Warmth of Love and Inclination: *Violante's* forc'd Love was now so much abated, that the Grave would be now more welcome than his Embraces, and so abhorrent were they become, that she almost fear'd to look or speak in a Manner not disobliging, lest it should encline him to desire the Gratification of — which was too dreadful to bear.

Thus did they live for many Months in a continual Perturbation, their Family still perplex'd with those unceasing Jars, that renders Marriage not only contemptible in the Eyes of the Libertine, but also frightful to all others. *Lepidio* of the two was the least unhappy, the Authority of a Husband giving him the Enjoyment of the Woman he lov'd, and satisfying the Dictates of his Jealousy, by taking away even a Possibility of being wrong'd; but she was a most wretched Creature at once, compell'd to aid the Rapture she detested, and without even the Consolation of knowing her Inclinations a Sacrifice to her Duty, since all she did was forc'd, and she no longer could make use of any Endear-

deavours to think kindly of this Tyrant of her Tranquility.

Yet in the midst of all those Racks of Mind did she not once struggle to get free; she form'd no Schemes for an Elopement, nor entertain'd a Wish that some bold Youth inspired by enterprizing Love shou'd attempt to restore her lost Freedom, she look'd on her Condition as past Relief, abandon'd herself over to her wretched Lot, nor hop'd a Period to her Griefs till Death. Nothing could be more strange, than that the close Confinement she was kept in, and the melancholy Misfortunes brought upon her, did not either destroy her Health, or in some despairing Moments occasion her to lay violent Hands on her wretched Body. But not to detain my Reader with a tedious Recital of her Miseries, which any who considers her Manner of living, may easily conceive. As she was one Morning sitting at her Toylet, looking at the Resemblance of her Face in the Glass, and upbraiding her ill Destiny, which had not decreed the Possession of those Beauties to a Man more worthy of them; she saw a Letter lying among her Combs, and taking it up, found it folded in the Fashion of a Billet doux, seal'd very artfully, and directed for herself. The Amazement she was in is not to be expressed; but Curiosity getting the better of all other Considerations, she hesitated not a Moment, but open'd it, and found the Contents to be as follows.

To the most excellent and most injur'd
of her Sex, the adorable *Violante*.

Confin'd and watch'd as you are, with Eyes
more vigilant than Argus's in the Fable, in-
dustrious Love has found the Way to quiet you, and

to tell you that he is a God above Restraint, that Locks nor Bolts can't keep him out. You are, Oh lovely Violante! the chief Object of his Care, nor can he suffer such all commanding Charms, such Youth, such heavenly Sweetness, to languish longer. ---- The little Deity with one of his unerring Darts, has pierc'd the Soul of Man whose Faith may merit your Regard; a Man whose whole Life shall be devoted to your Service, and cheerfully would spend the last Drop of vital Blood to free you from this ungenerous Restraint, and the ungrateful Author of it. Oh then, disdain not the benignant Power, accept the proffer'd Freedom, and throw off a Captivity unworthy of you to endure. --- There is a Stratagem contriv'd to deliver you safely from this House of Bondage, afford but your Consent, and you no more shall be the Property of a Wretch, an entire Stranger to Love, nor has he one Thought but of self Gratification in the Enjoyment of your Beauties. --- Enough has rigid Virtue been obey'd, allow now something to your Sexes Tenderness, and that Pity which is required of you to pay, one who long has languish'd in a hopeless Passion, yet suffers more in the Knowledge of your Distress than any Thing relating to himself can have the Power to insist. --- Believe me, charming Woman, that tho' I adore you with a Passion greater, and more violent than Words can express, or even Thought, unfeeling it, conceive: So dearly do I prize your Glory and your Peace, that were Lepidio a Husband worthy of your Love, I wou'd in Silence dye rather than interrupt your Tranquility, but it is for you, for you the Sovereign Mistress of my Soul, that I lament, it is your Condition more than my own that makes me wretched, and which has inspir'd me with the Means of Redress, slight, not I conjure you, the generous Proffer for your own Sake, and when

releas'd of this detested Slavery, use your Deliver-
 er as you please ; for you shall ever find me

The most disinterested, as well

as most ardent of your Slaves.

Incognita.

P S. By the same Means this came to you, an Answer will arrive to me. There is a little Silph a Friend to Love about you, which will convey the welcome Mandate, without Danger of Discovery by any mortal Eyes.

Had *Violante* given Credit to those Tales of Faries, Genies, or Spirits which so amuse the World; she would have thought this Billet had been brought by supernatural Means; she could neither imagine from whom it should be sent, nor by what Hand convey'd to that Place, the *Duenna*, who waited on her, was a Relation of her Husband's, and rather contributed to heighten his jealous Chimeras, than reduce him to more Reason, and there had been no other Person in her Chamber. but a black Slave, one of the most deformed and hideous of those Wretches *Lepidio* had chose out for her Attendant; he was lame of one Arm, blind of one Eye, and almost double with Crookedness: This Fellow, she remembered, had brought some Ice in the Morning to cool Water with to wash her Hands, the Season being extremely sultry. This is a Custom very common in *Spain*, where, in Spite of the hot Climate, they are never without Snow on the Mountain Tops, nor Conveniencies under the Earth to preserve Ice. — But of this Wretch,

Wretch, who, that Morning had officiated, she could have no Notion, the very Aspect of him seeming to forbid Trust ; besides he could not speak a Word of *Spanish*, so there was no Likelihood, whoever her unknown Lover was, that he should make Choice of such a Person, in an Affair that requir'd so much Fidelity and Cunning. Neither was there any of the Family she could think a proper Person to be employ'd in this Intrigue; it cannot be said that she had various Conjectures, for it seem'd so impossible, that she had not the Power to guess by what Means it had been brought to pass, and was sometimes ready to believe her Senses were impos'd on, and that all was no more than the Force of Imagination, and the Effect of those melancholy Vapours that her Misfortunes had occasion'd. She read it over several times before she could persuade herself she was awake, or that she had a Paper in her Hands. Convinc'd 'twas no Illusion, her Surprise gave Way to Uneasiness how she should proceed, and whither it was Wisdom to answer or neglect it. A grateful Sentiment rising in her Mind, at least to thank the Man whose Love appear'd so generous, inspir'd her with a Desire of writing, but then the Reflection that whatever his Pretences were, they would terminate in a Design upon her Virtue, bid her beware how she entered into so dangerous a Correspondence, not all the ill Usage she had received from Don *Lepidio*, nor all his ungenerous Suspicions of her, were able to make her swerve in the least Tittle from her Honour, or once harbour a Thought of wronging him. She was very much strengthen'd in this Resolution by an Apprehension that this Letter might be convey'd thither by that jealous Husband himself, on Purpose to sound her Inclinations, and

discover something wherewith he might have an Opportunity to reproach her, and excuse the Treatment he daily us'd her with. It must be confess'd, that there was a very great Probability of this last Conjecture being true, considering how much she was debarr'd the Sight of Men, and with what Care her Charms were depriv'd from the Power of influencing any one to undertake her Delivery. She contented herself with concealing the Letter, leaving it to Time to bring to Light which of these Suggestions were true. The Adventure however ran strongly in her Head, nor could she think on any other Thing, till two Days after she found in the same Place a second Epistle, seal'd and directed in the same manner. With a vast deal of Impatience she open'd it, and examin'd the Contents, as hoping she should be able to find something that could let her into the real Intentions of the Author. The Lines were these,

To the fair Enemy of our own Tran-
quillity, the too lovely *Violante*.

*AH! why regardless of the Admonition of en-
treating Love, and disdainful of your own
Happiness, do you refuse Assent to what you ought
to court ——— By Heaven! the Man who offers
to restore you to that Liberty the Injustice of Le-
pidio has depriv'd you of, will sooner die than be
guilty of any Thing to offend you — Give over them
all needless Scruples ——— Fly from this detested
House, and do not wilfully destroy yourself by an un-
necessary Caution ——— I will convey you to a Monaste-
ry, the Moment you are at Liberty, if you see any
Thing in my Behaviour that may make you desire to
Join it ——— I know that these Epistles, and the
Manner*

Manner in which they are convey'd to you, appears mysterious, but Violante, there is not an Action of your Life, that is hid from my inquiring Love--- I see your Wrongs, am Witness of your injurious Husband's Treatment, and the Tears you shed, even in your most retir'd Moments, are not conceal'd from me ----- Nothing, my Charmer, is impossible to a Passion so zealous, so tender, and so faithful as is mine. You are the only Business of my Life, I have no other Wish than to be serviceable to you; and if you permit me not to execute that Stratagem which my inventive Grief for your Calamity has inspir'd me with, you will not only be cruel to yourself, but also ungrateful to the most passionate and sincere Regards that ever fill'd a Heart--- Be satisfy'd, most adorable Violante, that I love you, and have Honour, and can never act in a Manner unbecoming either of those Principles--- Return me therefore some Acknowledgment that you have receiv'd these Letters, and you shall then know more of him, who at present does no otherwise subscribe himself, than

Your faithful Slave;

Incognito.

P. S. I beg you will be so good to yourself, and just to my sincere Professions as to delay no longer than this Day an Answer of what I am to hope, which be pleas'd to leave in the Basin of Orange Flowers that stands on the Table by the Window, where you shall also find one from me to morrow. Once more, most adorable Violante, I conjure you to believe and be happy, Adieu.

As the first of these Epistles fill'd the Soul of Violante with Astonishment, the second had the same

same Effect; she began now to believe her
 some Enamorato who endeavour'd to serve
 and was convinc'd by the Direction of the Orange
 Flower Balon, that he must have made a Con-
 fident of some one of her Domesticks, but which
 she could not imagine, more than she could
 at her Admirer. However, having possess'd her-
 self with this Belief, Curiosity began to assume
 some Dominion over her Thoughts; she imagin'd
 there was some Gratitude due to a Man, who
 had taken so much Pains to let her know how
 much he commiserated her Condition, and as
 he had promis'd in the Conclusion of this last
 Letter to reveal himself on her Answer, she ea-
 sily prevail'd on herself to write one. --- If this
 Person be a Man of Honour, said she to herself,
 I can run no Hazard in replying to his Offers:
Lepidio deserves not the Sacrifice I have already
 made him, he uses me with Cruelty, and if this
 Stranger, more tender of my Peace than my
 inhuman Parents, has contriv'd to rid me of his
 Tyranny, without Prejudice to my Virtue, why
 should I refuse so generous a Relief? With these
 Resolutions she took Pen and Paper, and having
 carefully look'd round to see if there were no
 Observers near, she began to write an Answer,
 which in a few Moments she compleated in this
 Manner,

To the seemingly generous *Incognito*.

YOU shew yourself too well acquainted with the
 ill Usage I labour under, for me to deny it, as
 otherwise, perhaps, my Discretion would oblige me
 to do; I am infinitely indebted to you for the
 Concern you express for me; but as for the Offers
 you make, I neither will accept nor refuse, till I
 know

know from whom they come. When you think fit to let me know more, I shall readily approve or condemn the Liberty you propose; which, tho' I am very desirous of obtaining, you shall never force me to any Measures unsuitable to my Character, or those Principles, which, if you know me at all, you also know have been instill'd into me from my Truth, and which, with the utmost Punctuality, were observed ever since, by

Violante.

Having put this Letter into the Place appointed, she watch'd as much as possible the whole Day, to see who enter'd the Room, in hopes to discover which of the Servants it was who had this Correspondence with her Lover; but not observing that any of them went in, on going to Bed, she look'd into the Basin, and finding it lay as she had put it, was in a thousand Minds, if she should leave it or not, fearing it might fall into her Husband's Hands, or some one who might carry it to him, but the extream Desire she had of discovering who this unknown Adorer was, prevented her; and she resolv'd to run all Hazards to satisfy her Curiosity. She was, notwithstanding, very uneasy about it all Night, and the first Thing she did was to search for it, but instead of it she found an Answer from her Lover, that contained these Lines.

To the Divine *Violante*.

I Blame not your Caution. Oh! most excellent of all that ever bore the Name of Woman, and expected no less from that *Modesty and Prudence*
 So

so conspicuous in every Action of your Life--- Take
 then the whole Secret of this conceal'd Admirer,
 whose Name you doubtless have heard, but whose
 Person I fear you never have thought worthy of your
 Esteem; I am the Son of Don Mercurius Se-
 verinus, your near Neighbour. Scarce had you pass'd
 your Infant Days, when I entertain'd a Passion for
 you, too great and sincere to be extinguish'd, and
 having obtain'd of your Parents all the Encourage-
 ment my Soul wish'd for, I communicated it to
 my Father, in hopes he would have indulg'd my
 fond Desire, but Oh! he had other Views, and
 blind to Merit, was for marrying me where a
 Prospect of more Interest appear'd. Enraged at my
 Refusal, he sent me to travel, in so sudden a Man-
 ner, that I had not Time to form any Contrivance
 to let you know what 'twas I suffered for your Sake,
 nor permitted he my Return till you were made
 the Bride of this unworthy Lepidio. 'Twill be
 needless to tell you my Despair, at News so fatal
 to my Hopes. If you believe I love, or have any
 Notice what that Passion is, you will easily judge
 of the other --- But not all the Sufferings of en-
 during and tormenting Love, were half so afflicting
 to me as the being told how unhappy these Nuptials
 had made you, and how much you suffered by the Jeal-
 ousy and ill Humour of a Man, whom it is im-
 possible you could consent to marry, but in Obedience
 to your Parents Will --- Too much, therefore, love-
 ly Violante, have you already done to testify the
 Propensity of your Soul to Duty, Oh! now let Love
 and Gratitude be permitted to rule your future
 Actions --- I have Reasons, which, when known,
 you'll not condemn, for my having conceal'd, till
 I reveal by Word of Mouth, the Means by which
 I have obtain'd this Correspondence with you, I beg
 you will give me the Blessing of entertaining you
 but for one Hour, to morrow Night: Answer me
 not

that it is not impossible, for there wants but your
Permission to introduce, all other Things leave to
the Management of industrious Love, and the
watchful Care of

The ever faithful, and

most devoted,

Honorius Severinus.

P. S. Leave your Answer, this Night, as be-
fore.

All the Amazement and Inquietudes which had
before disturb'd the Breast of *Violante*, at the
Receipt of the former Epistles, vanish'd on her
Perusal of this, she was now convinc'd that it
had been no Artifice of her Husband's; and the
Quality and Reputation of the Man who lov'd
her, took away great Part of the Scruples she
had conceived against engaging with a Man who
declar'd himself her Lover: The Passion he pro-
fess'd took its Birth at a Time when only the most
honourable Intentions cou'd favour its Pursuit,
and the Constancy of it seem'd to demand her
utmost Regard: Besides all this, tho' she never
remembered to have seen his Person, she had
often been told Wonders in his Praise by those
who knew him, nor can it well be call'd a fal-
ling off from Virtue, if with all these Excite-
ments, joyn'd to the cruel Usage of *Lepidio*, she
entertain'd a Desire of conversing more nearly
with a Man who seem'd to deserve so much her
Gratitude. But what he meant by promising
himself the Means of entertaining her, was yet
a Riddle, being not able to imagine by what
Witchcraft he either could enter the House, or
see

she get out. She took the first Opportunity of being alone, and writ an Answer in these Terms..

To Don Honorius Severinus.

HAD you sooner made a Discovery of your self I sooner shou'd have ceas'd to wonder that a Woman under my wretched Circumstances should find any one to pity or advise her; but your Character and Sweetness of Disposition, and every human Virtue, would have made me easily believe that to be unhappy was a sufficient Plea to entitle me to your Care --- If you really were possess'd of any Passion for me before my Marriage, I shall make no Scruple of avowing that my Father was infinitely severe in dooming me to one so much the Reverse of every Thing I have heard of you --- I shall with Pleasure admit the Honour of your Conversation. Nor do I demand to know by what Means you expect to effect it, but shall attend the Issue with something more Impatience than I have hitherto been accusom'd to feel --- Take no Advantage of this free Confession, nor let the Transports of that Passion you profess, make you transgress, even in a Thought, the Bounds of Honour, and that Respect, which, however unfortunate she is, is due to the Virtue of

Violante

Having put this into the Bason, she retir'd into her Closet to meditate on what she had done. Never was a Head more taken up than hers, with the Variety of Ideas, which all at once presented themselves to her disorder'd Brain --- She thought it must be by no less than

than Magick Art, if *Don Honorius* really made good his Promise, and sometimes fancy'd the Strength of his Imagination had carry'd him to a Belief of Things impossible. Night gave no Cessation to the Tumults of her Impatency; Sleep was a Stranger to her Eyes, but she feign'd a Drowziness to prevent *Don Lepidio's* taking any Notice of her Watchfulness.

Being thus kept on the Watch till about the dead of Night, when all the Family were hush'd, she imagin'd she saw something of a glimmering Light glance by the *Antiperta* of the Chamber where she lay, and within that there stood the Bason of Orange-Flowers, A little surpriz'd, she gently pull'd the Curtain back, and plain'y saw the deform'd black Slave, already mention'd, pass with a Candle in his Hand directly to the Bason, and taking out of it her Letter, scapt it to his Mouth and kiss'd it with the most eager Transport, then stole away. Let the sensible Reader judge the Disorder this Sight must occasion. --- What could she imagine? What Idea could she form at a View so amazing. --- Had he only taken out the Letter, she would have believ'd no more, than that he had been the Person entrusted by *Don Honorius*: But his kissing it in that Manner, was something so terribly alarming, that she was ready to dye with the very Thought. --- All those delightful Imaginations with which she lately flattered herself, now gave Way to an equal Horror; instead of being beloved by one of the loveliest and most accomplished Gentlemen of the Age, she now imagin'd herself insnar'd into the Designs of one of the foulest, most deform'd and abject Slaves that Earth could yield, and when she considered how much she was in his Power, and that he who had dar'd to proceed thus far, would scruple nothing

thing for the Gratification of that Passion which had emboldened him, she was almost on the Point of awaking her Husband, and betraying to him the whole Affair. --- Nothing seem'd so dreadful to her as being belov'd by such a Wretch, and was just about to unravel all, by surprizing *Don Lepidio* with the Story, when a Reflection of another Kind come cross her Thoughts and prevented her; How can it be possible, said she to herself, that such a Creature can write in the Manner in which those Letters are dictated; he understands not *Spanish*, or suppose his ignorance of the Language be but an Artifice, the Style and Air could never come from one of his low Breeding. --- No, continued she, the Declarations I have received must certainly be sent by him whose Name they bear, I am not so wretched as I imagin'd; --- if this Fellow entertains any Notions of me, of that Kind, it is his own Misery alone, he will never dare to affront me with the Knowledge of them; --- at least, I'll try the Event, nor rashly risque the Good which Fortune promises in the Fears of what may be but an imaginary Ill. She endeavour'd to make herself easy, if possible, in these Sentiments, but all she could do was ineffectual; all that Night, and the next Day, did the Behaviour of the black Slave run in her Mind, and when he came at any Time into the Room to *Lepidio*, she was ready to sink with inward Horror at the Thoughts of what she had seen him do. -- Towards Evening he presented a Letter to her Husband, which as soon as he had read, he told her he must begone that very Instant about some Twenty Miles off to a near Relation from whom he had great Expectations, and was now at the Point of Death. She no sooner heard this, than she imagin'd it a Plot contrived either by *Don*

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Honorius or the Slave, to draw him out of the Way, and was so terrified lest it should be the latter, that she could not help entreating him not to go, with a Tenderneſs which amazed him: He was not, however, ſo eaſy to be perſwaded from what he imagined his Intereſt, he ordered his Coach to be got ready, and recommending her to the Care of the *Duenna*, took his Leave of her for that Night; it was too far for him to return till the next Day.

He was no ſooner gone, than a Thouſand Apprehenſions crowded into her Mind. She run every Minute to the Baſon of Orange Flowers, in Hopes of finding a Letter, which perhaps might give ſome further Light into what ſhe had to expect, but none being left, ſhe became almoſt diſtracted.

But all ſhe endur'd before going to Bed, was nothing to the Terror which invaded her; after ſhe was undreſt by the *Duenna*, and the Candles taken away, the Darkneſs adding to her Apprehenſions, and reminding herſelf what ſhe had ſeen the black Slave do the Night before, ſhe thought of nothing but that ſhe ſhould in a little Time hear him enter her Chamber, and invade her Ears with ſome insolent Declaration. --- Frighted beyond Meaſure at this ſhocking Idea, ſhe aroſe, and dark as it was, made a Shift to put on ſome Part of her Clothes; which done, ſhe ſet herſelf down on a Chair by the Bed-ſide, reſolving to wait the Iſſue of this myſterious Affair with as much Decency as poſſible. --- For more than an Hour did ſhe remain in the utmoſt Agitation of Mind, without hearing the leaſt Noiſe, and began at laſt to think, that nothing of what ſhe expected would come to paſs, But her Door on a ſudden was thruſt open, and there appeared

and before her wondering Eyes a Form which
 seem'd to have in it something more than human:
 It was a Man of more than ordinary Stature,
 but so finely proportioned as if Nature had de-
 signed him as a Pattern whereby she might mo-
 del the other Part of her Specie. --- His Hair,
 which hung in great Abundance of careless Ring-
 lets over his Shoulders, was of the most beauti-
 ful Black that ever was seen, and which to vast
 Advantage set off the matchless Whiteness of his
 Skin. --- His Eyes were of the same Colour with
 his Hair, and sparkled with a radiant Shine like
 Diamonds set in Jet. --- All his Features were
 admirable, and there was a certain Harmony ran
 through the Whole, which gave a Sweetness,
 that it is not in Language to describe. --- To
 add to his natural Perfections, he was drest with
 all the Aid of Art, nothing could be more rich,
 more magnificent, and more becoming than the
 Habit he had on. --- With Admiration and Won-
 der did *Violante* gaze upon him, but all unable
 to speak to him, or move from the Posture she
 was in, till he, setting down the Candle he had
 in his Hand, and throwing himself on his Knees
 before her, Let this low Prostration, Madam,
 said he, of my humble Body, testify how much
 my Soul is your Slave, and that the only Joy of
 both Soul and Body is in the glorious Hope of
 being serviceable to the divine, the injur'd *Vio-
 lante*. Are you, cry'd she, *Don Honorius Seve-
 rinus*? I am, answered he, that unhappy, happy
 Man, curst in the Misfortune of seeing another
 in Possession of the adorable *Violante*; yet blest
 to have it in my Power to testify how much
 I prize her Interest and Contentment; and was
 it from you, resumed she, that I receiv'd those
 Epistles? It was, replied he, with a low Bow.
 Good Heavens, said she, instruct me by what
 unguess'd

unguess'd at Means you convey'd them to my Chamber, who brought you the Answer I return'd or gave you Admittance into these forbidden Gates? Believe me, continued she, after a little Pause, and finding he was silent, I have a Reason more than Curiosity for this Enquiry, ease therefore my Astonishment, I conjure you, by a speedy Information, if you would have me think you love? You need not, Madam, answered he, have Recourse to Adjurations so powerful for any Thing in the Power of *Honorius*; your least Command is sufficient to oblige me to reveal the dearest Secret of my Soul. --- Tho' this, I must confess, I cannot speak, without being cover'd with a Confusion unworthy of my Sex, even while I know the Story will more than any Thing I can say, demonstrate the Greatness of my Love. --- What is it, continued he, that the Man influenced by *Violante's* Charms dares not attempt? What is it he would not condescend to bear? Being told of the *Capricio* of *Don Lepidus*, and that he entertained as Servants in his House all those that by Deformity secur'd his jealous Fears, I transform'd my self to a Shape the most shocking I could invent, black'd my Face and Hands with an Ointment I got for the Purpose, and bending my Body almost double, and counterfeiting a Lameness, in the Habit of a Slave, I got Admittance to the Family; and by appearing particularly frightful, gain'd his particular Favour --- Thus was I every Day blest with the Sight of all I wish'd to behold; and in that seemingly wretched State, had a Felicity which Grandeur could not give. The Knowledge of your unexempl'd Wrongs fir'd me with an Ambition to be the happy he that should redress them --- And if, pursu'd he, kissing

ing her Hand, the excellent *Violante* will consent to fly this House, which I can look on no otherwise than as her Prison, I have a Female Relation to whom I will conduct you, where you may remain conceal'd, till you resolve in what Manner you can with Safety be dispos'd.

Here he left off speaking, and *Violante*, surpriz'd and charm'd with a Passion which could enforce a Man of his Quality and Figure to take upon him so detestable a Form, thought she could never say too much in the Praise of so uncommon a Proof of Love and Generosity. She then told him how she had seen him come in the Night before, and take her Letter, and made him smile at the Account she gave him of the Apprehensions she had of the black Slave. Some Time was taken up with Discourses of this Nature. But the Night being far spent, *Don Honorius* reminded her, that if she resolv'd to make any Use of the Pains he had been at for her Escape, now was the only Time. But as much as she was charm'd with the Beauties of the Mind and Person of *Honorius*, as much as she now hated *Lepidio*, and long'd to be at Liberty, he found a vast Difficulty to prevail on her to go with him. In Spite of Love, in Spite of her injur'd Virtue, she still retain'd so much Dominion over her Soul, that she dreaded doing any thing that might even seem the Appearance of a Breach of it. However, when that Letter sent to her Husband wou'd be discover'd to be forg'd on Purpose to draw him out of the Way, it would add to his Suspicions, and encrease his ill Treatment of her, join'd with the Fears of never more being happy in the Conversation of the charming *Honorius*, his Entreaties, and her Despair, all to gether, at last brought her to consent, and pack-
ing

ing up in a little Casket what Jewels and Things of Value she had, gave him her Hand, and quitted that hateful House, which at first she enter'd with the extreamest Reluctancy.

The Lady to whom she was conducted, liv'd but a small Distance off, and they were welcom'd by her in a Manner that convinc'd *Violante* that *Don Honorius* had not spoken of her but with the greatest Honour and Regard. The Remainder of the Night was past in Demonstrations of Love, Friendship, and Gratitude. *Honorius* afresh assuring her, that he had no other Views till Time should work an Alteration in her Circumstances, than that of delivering her from the Servitude she laboured under. The Lady join'd her Assurance of that disinterested Affection of her Kinsman; and *Violante*, eas'd of all her Scruples, grew the most contented Woman in the World.

The next Day *Honorius* made it his Business to pry into what might be rumour'd on this Affair, *Don Lepidio* was return'd, and full of Rage, had search'd for the fair Fugitive in all Places where he could hope to find her; but his Endeavours being vain, he branded her with all the opprobrious Names his jealous Fury could invent, yet found but small Pity from those to whom he address'd his Complaint, his Cruelty to that Lady being so well known, there were but few who condemn'd her Flight.

For about a Month did *Violante*, unknown and unsuspected continue in that House to which *Honorius* had conducted her, blest every Day with the Society of him who was now become the dearest Friend on Earth. But at the End of that Time, the Father of the Charmer of her Soul expiring, she was obliged for some few Days to live without his Presence, and that

short

short Absence convinc'd her how much those suffer who love and are depriv'd of the Object of their Affections ---- But well did he make amends for the Want of his Conversation; the whole Time that Decency oblig'd him to keep Houle for the Obsequies of his Father, he employ'd in proving with what an honourable Passion he regarded *Violante*: Having an Influence over some Persons who were acquainted with *Lepidio*, he engag'd them to make Use of their utmost Artifice to persuade that raging Man to sue a Divorce; which they did with such Success, that the first Visit this faithful Lover made her, he had the Pleasure of letting her know the Process was begun, and that he hoped she would soon be as free to return his Passion, as the Death of his Father, had left him to make an Offer of it. --- This Manner of Proceeding; together with the respectful Distance he always observ'd towards her, proving his Designs on her to be accompany'd with the strictest Honour, made her look on herself as the happiest of her Sex, and give a Loose to that Affection for him, which before she made use of her utmost Efforts to set Limits to the Growth of.

Don Lepidio having none to oppose the Divorce he aim'd at, soon obtain'd it, and *Honorius*, tho' at great Expence, at the same Time privately solliciting a Dispensation from the See of *Rome*, to authorize a second Marriage for *Violante*. His Holiness at length granted it, and before the Expiration of a Year, the Town beheld that suppos'd lost Lady shine out in greater Splendour than she had ever yet appear'd. She was publicly marry'd to *Don Honorius*, and nothing could be more magnificent than the Celebration

bration of their Nuptials; to vindicate her Honour, and his own Choice, that generous Man caus'd printed Copies of the whole Transaction to be dispers'd through all the Towns of Note in *Spain*. And none who either heard or read the Story, but what applauded a Constancy so uncommon, and condemn'd the Jealousy of *Lepido*, who, by his own Mis-management had depriv'd himself, not only of the most beautiful, but also most virtuous Women in the World.

Marriage made no Alteration in the Behaviour of these two worthy Persons to each other, unless it were to render them more endearing, both were perfectly satisfy'd with each other's Conduct, and Confinement was a Stranger to their mutual Confidence. Nor indeed is there any true Love accompany'd with Distrust, all naturally hate to be suspected, and tho' *Violante* never had a Love for *Don Lepido*, the Strength of her Virtue would have carry'd her Endeavours so far, that in Time perhaps she might have been brought to do that out of Tenderness, which at first she but submitted to thro' Duty; and 'tis possible, that had *Henrius*, with all his Charms, fallen into the same Measures, her Admiration of him might by Degrees have worn off, and she but with Pain have endur'd a Restraint so ungenerous. All Husbands therefore should observe this Maxim, to rule rather by Choice than Compulsion, for if the Inclination is against you, you but in vain think to confine the Body, some Way or other will be found to circumvent your Caution.

*He, who, to his Interest, the Fair wou'd bind,
By Love must place a Padlock on her Mind.*

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